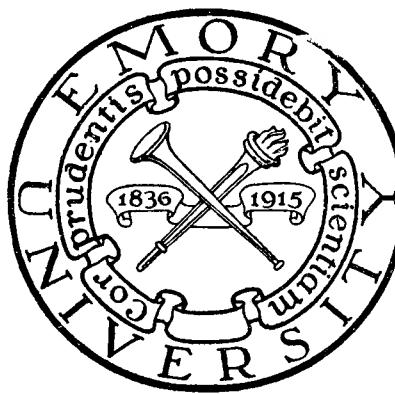


BOYS and their Rulers



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YODD'S AND THEIR SUGARS



BOYS AND THEIR RULERS;

OR,

WHAT WE DO AT SCHOOL.

“ Whate'er Boys do, in' grief, in' ire, or sport,
Joys, wanderings, are the sum of my report.”

Second Edition.

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PREFACE.

CICERO told his friend Atticus that he had always ready prepared a collection of prefaces, to be used as occasion might require. In his case the only judgment necessary was the nice dovetailing of the preface to the book.

The preface to a book is of more importance than at first appears. If it is too well-seasoned, why then the body of the work might read tame and insipid; if, on the contrary, the style of the introduction is dull and uninteresting, then the reader would feel inclined to throw away the volume, without a glance at its contents. Both of these evils are to be avoided.

Just now biographies and autobiographies are jostling each other pretty recklessly, and therefore one more may be *de trop*; but then it should be remembered, that the biography of one school-boy is, in its essentials at least, the history of all. To depict the everyday life of boys at school is my object—"how we work," and "how we play," in all the various gradations of schools, from the Classical down to the well-remembered one of the Schoolmistress; the latter so beautifully described by Shenstone in his poem of that name—

"In every village marked with little spire,
Embower'd in trees, and hardly known to fame,
There dwells in lowly shed and mean attire,
A matron old, whom we Schoolmistress name."

Further, I have ventured to drop a hint here and there, for the purpose of directing attention to what might prove advantageous in the education of boys.

Many of our public schools and colleges are noble foundations; still it behoves those who are intrusted with their management to consider whether they have introduced from time to time salutary reforms consistent with the march of improvement. We are all of us too apt to jog on in the beaten track of our forefathers, rather than study to hew out for ourselves more eligible and expansive paths.

The author tenders his thanks to an "Old Blue," and other correspondents, for their valuable communications, which have been incorporated in the present edition.

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BOYS AND THEIR RULERS.

CHAPTER I.

How difficult it is to interest a reader! To engage the attention of youth, and at the same time to instil instruction, has puzzled cleverer heads than mine. My task is comparatively an easy one, as I propose merely to pursue the phantoms of memory, occasionally grasping at circumstances either on the right or left, to assist me in my onward course. If the narrative should please, I am satisfied; if it does more, I am honoured by any benefit that may be derived from it. Without fatiguing my readers with any detail respecting the ancestry of our house, as to whether my forefathers descended in one unbroken line from William the Conqueror, or from the King of Connaught, I simply state the fact, that I was born in the country. Being the youngest of a large family, of course I was well looked after by my brothers and sisters; at any rate they told me so, when I was old enough to understand them. Being the youngest in the family has some advantages, but also many disadvantages; and it is a difficult question to solve, on which side the balance hangs. Where there is property to divide—which was not our case—it is a serious matter, to be so many steps down the family ladder. Then, again, being a junior, you have so many props to lean against, that it is a long time before you learn to go alone. The youngest child always retains the name of baby the longest. They say my sister cried excessively when I was too old and too heavy to be nursed. As in early life, the last

child has the most fondness heaped upon it, so when it arrives at maturity, being less able to bear the buffets of the world, it is frequently the most neglected. The term "he is only the youngest son" has passed into a proverb, with anything but an eulogistic signification.

The first circumstance in my life of which I have any very distinct recollection occurred at the age of four years. London is a place about which children early hear strange reports. One morning in the height of summer, having been dressed for a ramble in the fields, at the back of our house, a desire seized me that I should like to witness the wonderful city with its golden pavement. Accordingly I stole away unperceived, taking with me my lilliputian horse and cart, and pursuing the road along which I had seen the stage coaches pass on their way to London. Having trudged along about two miles, I became tired, and as a merciful man is merciful to his beast, I thought my horse was also fatigued; so leaving the road, having just crossed over the bridge, I descended to the water side to give the animal a refreshing draught. Children do not philosophise, neither do they calculate; perhaps it is lucky for them that they do not. Presently the water in which my toy horse and cart had been immersed, began to exercise its influence on the glue, and thus the fabric tumbled to pieces. The rippling waves were carrying away the fragments, to my great consternation, and all my energies were called into action to stop the work of destruction. Suddenly a well-known voice is heard, and Mary Ambrose, the farmer's daughter, in great fright snatches me from what she asserted to be a most dangerous situation. To her hasty interrogation I simply replied that I was going to London. When we reached my father's house, I was scolded and caressed at one and the same time. It seemed to me then that too much importance had been attached to this act of truancy. It is now many years since I have seen any of the members of the Ambrose family,

but so long as we were acquainted, this little circumstance was always mentioned at each delightful visit to the farm-house, where for the time being I was always happy.

“Now from the town,
Buried in smoke and noisome damps,
Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields.”

Mrs. Mawdry, or, as she was called by the children, Mother Mawdry, was a good old soul, and must have been of an excellent disposition to preserve anything like equanimity of temper under the very trying circumstances of keeping a day-school for little boys and girls. Her house, to chronicle truly, was *not* a very nice little cottage with ivy and roses entwining about the lattice windows; but, on the contrary, wore an exceedingly dreary aspect. It was situated in an alley leading from the High Street of our little country town. The school-room was dark and uncomfortable, and it was wonderful how the old lady, even with the assistance of her spectacles, managed to read over the lessons. Perhaps she did not read them over at all, but knew them by heart. The old lady was tended by her niece, who was a great favourite with everybody; such a kind, sprightly, little girl. If ever the old lady was angry, the niece interposed to prevent the effects of her wrath; and when any of us deserved punishment, her pleadings in our behalf were mostly successful. Learning our letters and pulling to pieces the spelling-books occupied the school hours. The so-called indestructible spelling-books had not then been invented, and even if they had been, I much question if we should not have succeeded in neutralising their effects. When a child first attends school, he most certainly requires the stimulus of a new book, and not one that has been dog's-eared and torn. How far superior are the elementary books of these days,—illustrated as most of them are, with beautiful wood-engravings, descriptive of historical facts. Then again, how nicely embellished are the exteriors,—really quite attractive. It is undoubtedly a wise

proceeding to make every thing in connection with school-books as interesting as possible.

One Wednesday afternoon, being in the midst of my play-things, and whilst busily engaged in adjusting a piece of tinsel on the coat of Rob Roy, or some other theatrical "character," my name was shouted out by the servant. After undergoing a rather hasty putting in order, I was ushered into the parlour, and introduced to my future governess. For some days previously I had overheard sufficient scraps of conversation to make me aware that some new arrangements were to be made affecting my comfort or discomfort.

The Misses Green were two spinsters of a certain age, who kept a preparatory boarding-school for young gentlemen. I wonder why it should be necessary to say on brass plates, "young ladies" and "young gentlemen :" it would be much more correct to write, girls and boys. It was Miss Green who sat in the parlour awaiting my approach. She was tall, very upright, and smiled most blandly when I first entered the room. Her voice, however, was not agreeable; indeed it might have been called very harsh and unmusical. Although she plentifully bestrewed her conversation with endearing epithets, doubts would arise in my mind, that, perhaps, during school hours the assumed mildness of her expressions was often exchanged for more natural and less pleasant phraseology. All the necessary preliminaries having been arranged, it was agreed that after the Christmas recess I should be placed under the care of the Misses Green. Considering that the school was not many hundred yards from my father's house, I did not very much grieve at the prospect before me. Moreover, I did not fancy that much severity could be practised by a governess; all this was associated in my mind with the name of schoolmaster. I had good reason, notwithstanding, to alter my opinion. A few days before the time appointed for my reception at the preparatory school, my father went to London, and promised to bring home

some toys for us. On these occasions the junior branches of our family were permitted to sit up rather later than usual to welcome our parent's return. The night was cold and foggy, and the wind very boisterous; everything out of doors was miserable in the extreme. In our little back parlour the fire was burning cheerfully, and a merry group of us were sitting around the hearth, listening to each footstep as it approached the door, passed it, and then gradually died away in the distance. At length he came, and such a volley of inquiries beset him! Seeing a large parcel under his arm, I watched it with great anxiety. Its contents were a hobby-horse, a whip, and two dolls. These were quickly apportioned to one or other of us; and what a contented family circle was thus easily made! The supper-table had been cleared, the clock had just struck ten, and we were all seated around the blazing embers, when, to our great consternation, strange sounds in the chimney were heard. My parents were evidently much alarmed, although they attempted to appear very calm and resigned. Amidst all this bewilderment, everybody suggested that something must be immediately done, but nobody was willing to undertake anything to clear up the mystery.

Our house adjoined the Town Hall, and as at that time there was not sufficient accommodation for all the prisoners at the borough gaol, some were confined in cells within this building. My father, without hinting to us his ideas upon the subject of the disturbance in the chimney, quietly withdrew, and left his family in terrible suspense. During his absence, which appeared fearfully long, we were all huddled together, very much increasing our fears by recounting all the strange stories of ghosts and hobgoblins. Presently the scraping noises in the chimney were discontinued, but another direful clatter began, for the latch of the yard-door was kept in perpetual motion. At this juncture of affairs there was screaming, but some of us had sufficient courage to face the enemy, who leisurely walked

in, no less a creature than my favourite black cat. This animal, with much sagacity for one of the feline race, was in the habit of jumping up and placing her paw on the latch until it was raised, the door opening inwards of its own weight. In our fright, this feat of the cat's had been quite overlooked. Just as we had contrived to concoct a ghastly smile, we were again thrown into a state of exceeding nervousness by a knocking at the front door. Three of us crawled to the door, opened it, and in walked my father laughing. He quickly explained the matter, and we were all much amused with his relation. An old woman had been trying to make her escape from prison, and was working a way through the brick-work with a piece of iron-bar. When the officers entered her room, she had covered over with some straw the hole in the wall. Had the old lady succeeded in her attempt to get free, she would have tumbled down our chimney, which was erected against the prison wall.

“Walk in and take a seat. Miss Green will be here presently,” said the servant. I did so, and hastily adjusted my frill, stealing a look at the mirror. I need not, however, have been in such a flurry, for I was left in nervous suspense for at least half an hour. The room was cold and uncomfortable, although there were unmistakeable attempts to make it appear otherwise. I will not describe the articles of furniture; every school-boy knows what they are. Here a piano, there a book-case; perhaps a pair of globes on one side, and an old-fashioned what-not on the other. This latter was over-laden with music and papers. The fire-place was very clean and shining, but no friendly fire invited you towards it. Benumbed with cold, and trying very hard to amuse myself with a selection of poems that was open before me, I began to bemoan my fate. Here I was started from my reverie by the entrance of two ladies.

Turning round, I recognised one as Miss Green, and the other I was informed was Miss Selina Green; so now it was

clear that my future rulers were before me. The conversation, brief as it was, reminded me at once that I had heard the same sound before, although the expressions in our parlour did not quite coincide with Miss Green's mode of parlance at home.

In this school were educated and boarded twenty-eight little urchins, their ages averaging from five to nine. Besides the Misses Green, we had an assistant to watch over our studies; her name was Miss Roberts. Poor thing, what a wretched life she led, and all, perhaps, for ten pounds a year. It was her duty to teach, dress, and to take care of the pupils, generally. She was always employed, either in darning stockings, ruling the copy-books, correcting exercises, or playing the piano-forte for the amusement of Miss Green's friends. How often have I regretted the little annoyances which this patient teacher experienced from our thoughtlessness. Early one morning my ears were gladdened with the voice of Miss Roberts's brother. He had long been expected to return from sea, and his arrival was the harbinger of good news to his sister, for her release from the dominion of Miss Green was quickly arranged. She left the preparatory establishment to take charge of the house of her brother, who purchased a small estate in an adjoining county.

At length it was considered judicious to transfer me to a higher school. I was to pass from the hands of the Misses Green to Mr. Smith.

In the country, education is sadly mismanaged, as it frequently happens that the schoolmaster is qualified for anything but teaching youth; and, moreover, the parents of the children do not exercise that circumspection which is necessary in so important a matter. Besides this, it may be, that no good schools have been established in the neighbourhood, and the parents may not be able to afford to send their children away from home.

There is even now, with all the increased advantages of

education, a culpable neglect on the part of parents to select appropriate teachers for their children. In some cases, circumstances which are detrimental to the interests of a child's education exercise an undue influence. Mr. Smith was indebted to my father a large sum of money; and as there did not appear much prospect of the amount ever being paid, it was thought advisable to run out the obligation in my education. With the view of overcoming a difficulty, I fell under the care and guidance of my first schoolmaster. Mr. Smith was an easy, good-tempered, and somewhat clever pedagogue. His taste was most decidedly bucolic, and he was rarely to be seen in the town, excepting during the hours when he ought to have been attending to his scholars. At this school we did pretty much as we pleased, and studied exactly what suited our inclinations. When our tutor did take an interest in anything, it was the breaking-up business that aroused his dormant energies. His delight was to see the boys busily employed in making wooden swords, and pasteboard helmets and bucklers. When the holidays drew near he was very punctual in his attendance at our theatrical rehearsals. On the breaking-up day, each boy's friends received an invitation to attend in the school-room, which was fitted up for the occasion. Between the acts, cake and wine were handed round to the admiring and delighted guests; many of whom, no doubt, were quite satisfied with the proficiency of their boys, because they could stamp and "tear a passion to tatters."*

Under such authority, I made little or no progress, beyond learning "My name is Norval," &c., and how to cook sausages on a slate. This latter accomplishment was the favourite amusement of Mr. Smith in cold weather; the sausages being fried on a slate placed on the top of the stove.

* A curious circumstance, in reference to the private theatricals at Reading under Dr. Valpy, was, that the servants and common people always preferred the "Medea" of Euripides in Greek to the English play. '

My friends were very naturally dissatisfied with Mr. Smith's plan of education: fortunately for me, they decided upon a change. My brother, in order to finish off his studies with *éclat*, had been sent to the principal academy in the town, and in this school I was destined to commence another course of tuition, strangely differing from the plan pursued by Mr. Smith. The house of my new schoolmaster occupied a very commanding situation in the principal street in the town. In large letters over the gateway might have been seen "Classical and Commercial Academy," and on the door, "Mr. Marsh." There were forty boarders, and a similar number of day-scholars. We had a resident English and also a French master. Mr. Marsh was a tall, thin, and excessively nervous man; possessed of excellent natural abilities, and good classical acquirements. In addition to these, he was also a beautiful penman, and a proficient in arithmetic. It is seldom that so many and so varied advantages are found in one individual. The domestic arrangements of his house were as cleverly managed as those of the school-room. Mrs. Marsh was exactly the person one would select as the wife of a schoolmaster. With a commanding figure, active and intelligent, she won the respect of all the scholars. Nor was she wanting in kindness, for if any poor little fellow was ill, Mrs. Marsh was a most attentive nurse. Character is displayed in a thousand little actions, and is often most conspicuous when least intended.

In this school was collected together a motley group of boys from all countries. We had East and West Indians, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh; a boy from St. Domingo, and one from Holland. It was rather difficult sometimes to manage so many strange tempers. Then, again, a tremendous feud existed between the boarders and the day-scholars, most of whom were town boys. The youth from St. Domingo was a great favourite in the school, and his skill in mechanism was remarkable. Amongst other ingenious machines which he cut out of soft

wood, he manufactured a perfect model of a complicated well, with cog-wheels, and every part of it capable of working in the most complete order. Windmills and other models of the kind he made with the greatest ease; not as boys usually do these things, but in the neatest and most correct manner. If he be alive now, I shculd imagine that he must have become an expert engineer.

Our English usher was a tall and most uncomfortable looking man, of some forty-five years of age. He said little, appeared very timid, and was neither liked nor disliked by the boys. When he entered into any amusement, which was not often, it was puerile in the extreme. After having devoted the whole morning to the upper classes in Latin reading, and taking the utmost pains to engage the boys' attention, he would spend the greater part of the afternoon in slicing with a penknife a nutmeg, and munching it with evident relish. In the excitement of teaching, he was seen to advantage: school over, he relapsed into a state of intellectual torpidity.

Our French master was nothing like those fanciful sketches which novelists are pleased to pourtray. He was neither a doubtful Count nor a revolutionary refugee; but a good-natured, sprightly, and handsome Frenchman. He spoke his native language with elegance, and English very fluently. Well skilled in music and singing, he was a most agreeable companion for the boys, and amused us all exceedingly on half-holidays.

On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons we took long rambles in the neighbourhood, and on one occasion a stag afforded us considerable diversion. We were all marching forth, two by two, and had just reached a pond at the upper end of the town, when suddenly we heard the huntsman's horn, and in a moment a pack of hounds came rushing on, followed by several horsemen. The pursued stag had by some means found his way into the town, and he made at once for the water, jumping the paling which surrounded the pond. What with the barking of

the dogs, and the hooting of men and boys, you might have imagined John Gilpin was taking a second ride. Very few saw the stag, for he was here, there, and away in a twinkling. In jumping out of the pond, he unhorsed one of the riders, and scampered down the principal street "at a killing pace," as a sportsman would say. The stream of dogs, men, and boys followed at his heels, and the noble beast must have been sadly bewildered, for he rushed under the market-house, and ran into a clothier's shop, where he was immediately secured. They left him panting and restless until the evening, when he was removed to the park from which he had been taken. But to return to our school-room, where we were all deep in discussion respecting the Chevy Chace which the stag had afforded us. As soon as we had fairly tired ourselves with relating all kinds of adventurous anecdotes bearing upon the stag hunt, pens, ink, and paper were in great demand, to give distant friends some account of this somewhat extraordinary circumstance. Tom Franklin managed to pen a very long letter to his godfather on this occasion, in which he exercised his inventive faculties not a little, so as to please the old gentleman, who was a superannuated huntsman. The long letter fully answered the end for which it was written, for the next post brought him a handsome "*tip*."

In this academy I first began to blunder through *hic*, *haec*, *hoc*, genitive *hujus*, &c., and uncommonly difficult I thought it was. True enough, Latin is not an easy language, and very few attain to anything like proficiency in it, notwithstanding its great utility. If boys at school only knew how the study of Latin would assist them in learning modern languages, and, indeed, in rightly understanding the grammar of their own, they would not be so careless about their lessons. There is a fault somewhere, but it does happen that children at school mostly commence the study of Latin, or French, before they know really anything of English grammar. This may, in some measure,

arise from the want of fixed principles in the English language; the exceptions, in most instances, out-numbering the rules.

Our language having been enriched by additions from so great a variety of ancient and modern tongues, has become very complicated, but at the same time exceedingly powerful; thus compensating for the difficulty of acquiring it. When our numerous possessions are taken into calculation, together with the increasing spirit for emigration, it does seem probable that English will become the universal language. Our transatlantic brethren will also help forward this great result.

Very near to Mr. Marsh's school occurred a circumstance, some few years after I had left it, which would have interested us as boys exceedingly. It was quite a Cumming Gordon kind of affair; no less a matter, indeed, than a panther hunt. The summer season had been particularly fine, and the autumn was sultry in the extreme; our town, during the day-time, was almost deserted; nobody that could possibly avoid it cared to promenade on the hot and dusty pavement. As a contrast, the streets and contiguous fields were crowded in the evening with young and old, all seeking to inhale the refreshing breeze.

“This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch, upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till Fancy had her fill; but ere a close
A dreadful roar was up amidst the words,
And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance.”

“A panther has escaped!” was the general cry. In what neighbourhood nobody cared to inquire. Helter-skelter, all hurried home, fearful of meeting the wild beast. Arriving within the town, we awaited with some degree of anxiety the denouement of this terrible affair.

The dreams of the townsfolk that night were doubtless of an unpleasant nature. Bolts and bars were watched, and fastened with more than ordinary care; whether the watchmen went their usual rounds, nobody has related; most probably every man, woman, and child carefully avoided being out of doors that dreary night.

“Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn
Sprinkled with rosy light the dewy lawn.”

How carefully the burghers opened their doors and shutters; —the punctual baker was a little behind with his rolls, on the morning after the frightful eve. “What news, what news?” each inquires of his neighbour; and then comes the encouraging intelligence, that the wild beast has been shot. An eye-witness gave me the following particulars:—In a village close to the town, some farmers’ men, returning from work, spread the unwelcome tidings, that an uncommon looking animal, as large as a donkey, had been seen scampering about the fields and woods. At first it was considered these men were trying the credulity of their listeners to the greatest pitch, but as they proposed to conduct the body of unbelievers to the place where they had seen the brute, some thought there might be a little truth in their assertions. A few of the stoutest-hearted villagers having armed themselves with pitch-forks, and other such-like weapons, proceeded to the spot indicated by their guides. Sure enough, to the universal dismay of the whole company, there was an animal of considerable magnitude feasting upon a cow. *Suure qui peut* was the order of the day; tired and out of breath they reached the village, where the report spread like wild-fire. Mothers screamed at every noise; the children were scared, without exactly knowing why; and the once peaceful village was in an uproar. The few bold men that dared to venture forth consulted together as to the course which should be pursued the next morning to capture the monster. Luckily, as it afterwards proved, an old sportsman acted as the Ulysses on

the occasion. Passing over the night, which was long and dreary to most of the villagers, we narrate the morning's adventure. Human nature adjusts itself to anything, however dreadful. On the preceding night you could not have mustered ten people to face the panther; now, after the lapse of only a few hours, the number of combatants had wonderfully increased. A numerous company of men and dogs started early in the morning on the memorable panther-killing expedition; having for their captain a highly respectable veteran sportsman.

Arriving near the scene of action, the whole band were horrified at seeing the panther leap a hedge with a man in his mouth, who was crying loudly for help. Consternation had so seized upon the hunting party, that for some minutes those who did not run away were rendered immovable by the frightful sight they had just witnessed. The dogs barked, but were careful to keep a most respectful distance from the disturbed and savage animal. It would have been exceedingly dangerous to have fired into the bush, where the groaning man had been dragged by his relentless enemy. What, then, was to be done?

Luckily at this juncture, when despair appeared to have taken possession of all present, a boy came running fast with a large dog at his heels. The faithful creature was a mongrel of the stag-hound breed, very muscular, and as large as a Newfoundland. Without requiring much persuasion, the dog rushed forward in the direction of the hedge, and was quickly engaged in a fierce combat with the panther.

The enraged animal relinquished the wounded man for his new prey, and both dog and panther were striving together in mortal combat, the former being in sad disadvantage. It was a sickening sight to see the poor dog being mangled by this enormous brute. At this juncture of the affair, the old sportsman determined upon testing the power of his rifle, which he had taken the precaution to bring with him in preference to his fowling-piece. Creeping slowly to within a few yards of the

THE DOG AND THE PANTHER.



panther, and taking advantage of the creature's struggle with the dog, he pulled the trigger, and so sure was his aim, that the monster, after taking a sudden spring forward, fell down dead. For some minutes the by-standers merely looked on, fearing to approach, but as soon as they had recovered from their fright, two objects demanded their attention. The poor man was found to have been very seriously wounded, and was as quickly as possible removed to the village, and from thence to the infirmary, where he was confined for some months. The faithful dog had been completely bitten through the shoulder, and was otherwise much injured. Our old sportsman, who had acted so nobly on the occasion, did not forget to care for the unfortunate sufferer's wife and children. He headed a subscription, and, moreover, went to the expense of having the panther stuffed and exhibited at the Town Hall on several market days. The admission fee, sixpence each person, added to the amount raised by subscription, made a very handsome purse for the wounded man. When the stuffed panther was on view at the Town Hall, the dog, unable to stand upright from the injuries he had received, was placed on a cushion close to his late enemy; and it was interesting to see how carefully the dog watched the stuffed beast. Some few years after this circumstance took place I saw the dog limping along by the side of his master. Ultimately he died at a good old age, and now, thanks to the art of the taxidermist, grins defiance, in the museum of the old sportsman, at his ancient enemy.

CHAPTER II.

THE detail of any circumstances which recal to our minds the scenes of our school-boy days is more or less grateful to our feelings in after life ; and is it not delightful for the imagination to revel over all the little events of our early career? If such thoughts occasionally intervene, and divert our attention from the “ dreary intercourse of common life,” merely for one moment obstructing its ever-flowing stream, do they not well atone for being fostered? In youth we listen to a playmate’s history with peculiar pleasure, not unmixed with curiosity ; in riper years its recital often stimulates a yearning for the return of those days when tasks and games absorbed all our energies, and if sometimes it was an event of “ creeping like snail unwillingly to school,” still we had a compensating balance for this in an unexpected holiday, the bare announcement of which was quite enough to make us rush from the school-room in a perfect frenzy of delight. What excitement in after life can equal this?

Having been primed with a due supply of Latin at Mr. Marsh’s academy, it was considered that I was in a fit state to enter upon an entirely new style of life. I was destined to wear a blue coat and yellow stockings, and to become an inmate of the cloister. Here, then, was something for a country boy to speculate upon. I had certainly once seen in our neighbourhood one of the capless boys: but to whom he belonged, or from whence he came, I had not the slightest idea: evincing ignorance on my part no doubt, but nevertheless such was the fact. I should not be much surprised if many grown-up people would have been in a dilemma at any interrogatory respecting the strange creature’s whereabouts.

The foundation of Christ’s Hospital has been often treated upon, but the every-day life of the boys has remained untrodden

ground. I presume that parents will be somewhat interested in reading a few particulars of an institution in which a child of theirs has been, or may be, educated ; and boys who are about to enter will, without doubt, eagerly search for information in all minor details respecting the school. Brother Blues may also feel inclined to con over these few simple pages.

As a boy about to take the girdle, I searched with avidity every book that was likely to give me any information of the noble school to which I was going. I pored over a kind of history of the building, but could gain very little from the ponderous volume of the minutiae for which I sought so eagerly. Fortunately for me, an old Blue, who happened to reside in the neighbourhood, gave me much delight with his, I suspect, highly-coloured statements of the fun and frolic which he had enjoyed. From the dry and uninteresting "History of the School," I certainly gained some knowledge of its exterior ; but of its interior, if I may be allowed the antithesis, I was indebted to the oral description of the Doctor, of whom more anon.

To a quiet family residing in a country town, it is startling intelligence, that one of its members is to leave the parental roof ; but the effect of such intimation increases in proportion as the future life of the absentee is likely to be in contrast with his previous undisturbed course. It was early in the spring of 1825 that my father somewhat interfered with the usual equanimity of our family circle, by an important communication, conveyed in his own most mysterious style, to the effect that a presentation to Christ's Hospital for his youngest son had been offered to him. This announcement, as may be easily imagined, was received with a perfect hurricane of inquiries respecting the school ; but, however, few answers were returned. Amidst the confusion one voice was silent, one face was more than ordinarily serious. The mother foresaw that she must give up her youngest child ; this was indeed a serious trial to an anxious and fond parent. In our family it so happened that none of us had been educated

away from our native town, and thus the acuteness of a mother's feelings were excusable. "Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits," and I now reflect with pleasure upon the day, then so painful to me, when I first quitted the house of my father. We are, most of us, improved by wandering in the world: the edges of our prejudices become rounded; our imperfections are made visible to us by the superiority of others, and our own circumscribed notions expand as we gain acquaintance with men and manners.

"It is a poor centre of a man's actions, himself."

My anxiety was to learn every particular of the new world into which I was about to enter. My dreams were of cloisters and monks, though I hardly knew much of their history. It was a strange jumble, as I then understood it, of beads, books, and magi. Following up the theme of my future prospects to every one that I thought might know something of the Blue Coat School, I chanced one day to meet again the Doctor, who had been educated there. He was very intelligent, and imbued with a strong *tincture* of the *vis comica*. You may be sure that I took advantage of my new acquaintanceship to worry him with all kinds of questions upon the topic which so much interested me. He bore my importunities very patiently, and from time to time gave me some most amusing details, amongst others, one of a rat hunt that took place in the old dining-hall, —a building which has long since succumbed to the destroying hand of time. He described the rat hunt as having occurred one evening after supper, and when only a select few of the boys remained in the hall to clear the tables. Of course he was the hero on the occasion; at any rate, he was wounded in the affray.

My presentation did not mature until nearly two years after my father had received it, so that I had abundance of time to prepare for my admission to the London school, without having to pass through the probation of being sent to Hertford, which is customary with younger boys, particularly if they have not

commenced the study of the Latin language—which I had done, thanks to Mr. Marsh.

According to individual circumstances, “time gallops apace, or ambles on”—with me it seemed absolutely to crawl, and to this day I can hardly divest myself of the notion, that my last year of expectation did not contain the hottest summer and the coldest winter I ever knew, so long the time appeared. I always associate a very hot summer and a severe winter with the length of time.

At last the month, the day, appeared, and I was fully equipped for my journey, not as if I were about to enter some classical and commercial academy with a box full of clothes, “six towels, a knife and fork, silver spoon,” &c., but merely a few books, and a supply of handkerchiefs and night-caps; these articles of dress being all the wardrobe which the parents of a Blue are required to provide for him. But now came the farewell, and that sickening drooping of spirits experienced by all on leaving home for the first time, to enter on an unknown and future career. How often would we escape these seasons of separation; but then do they not minister to the joys of meeting? Kisses, tears, and hearty good wishes almost overpowered me. My father was, of course, to accompany me to London. We mounted the coach; then all my courage forsook me, and in a flood of tears my long partially subdued feelings found relief. In these days a long stage coach is scarcely, if ever, seen, but when the circumstances transpired which we are now recording they were in all their glory. There is always something to amuse when a coach is about to start, and my attention was quickly arrested by the scene of bustle common on such occasions. There was the landlady smiling most graciously, evidently pleased, because the coach was full; then running to and fro might have been seen the obsequious ostlers, the parting passengers, the idle loiterers, and, last of all, the cool and collected coachman, who made a circuit of his vehicle, eyeing his clients

with a philosophic glance—suggestive of tips at the journey's end. After this our Jehu, to show his carefulness, closely examines the horses, harness, bits, &c. This inspection is followed by a few words to the ostler about the grey mare's legs, or when the new horse is to have a trial. We start; the streets passed rapidly in review, as I watched with aching heart every house—nay, if possible, I would have counted the very bricks of the last little cottage. As the vehicle crossed a bridge within a short distance of the town, which, as a child, I had considered the outer wall of my little world (it was here I lost my horse and cart), my grief received a fresh stimulus. With a feeling of affection for those dear friends that I had left behind, how eagerly I watched the lofty spire of yon old Abbey, beneath whose sacred roof I had often wandered silently with childish dread, lest I should awaken a ghostly array of monks from the many curious nooks and corners. London was at last reached, and we quickly wended our way towards Christ's Hospital. We entered under the dreary gateway from Newgate Street, and as we passed the porter's lodge found ourselves within the arched cloisters. My attention was immediately engaged by the numerous tombs and tablets; and but for the sounds of the scholars at play, I should have fancied myself in a city of tombs, so near together dwelt the living and the dead. The very atmosphere seemed different; and with wondering eyes I gazed upon my father, whose features I could scarce believe the same. As various shades of light exhibit a landscape under different aspects, so is it when man is seen out of his usual course of life. Perhaps I was wrong, but I thought that I could detect the marks of great emotion on the countenance of my father, when he led me hand in hand along those dismal avenues. It is a very trying moment to a right-minded parent when he feels that he is relinquishing the trust of his son's education to strangers. But we have arrived at the school, and must now give some account of its foundation.

CHAPTER III.

IT is, I believe, pretty generally known that King Edward VI. founded Christ's Hospital. This monarch in early life displayed much zeal for the spreading the doctrines of the Reformation. This, no doubt, in some measure he almost inherited from his uncle on his mother's side, the Duke of Somerset. Perhaps no prince ever gave such early promise of excellence and worth. The good Bishop of London (Dr. Ridley) was a most fit tutor, and well did he advise his young charge. It was principally through his instrumentality that Prince Edward was induced to carry out those undertakings which will ever stamp his short reign with glory. In the year 1552, one year only before his death, was a Royal Charter granted for Christ's Hospital, St. Bartholomew's Bridewell, and St. Thomas's Hospitals—and the Mayor, Commonalty, and Citizens of London were incorporated “Governors of the possessions, revenues, and goods of the Hospitals of Edward VI. King of England.”

On the 6th of July, 1553, this good young king expired at Greenwich, in the sixteenth year of his age and the seventh of his reign.

In speaking of King Edward's illness, all historians seem to agree that the symptoms were much aggravated, and indeed his death hastened, by the injudicious treatment of an ignorant woman, to whom the king's life was intrusted after the State physicians had been dismissed by the Earl of Northumberland's advice. The result proved exactly as might have been anticipated: so far from any relief arising from the medicines prescribed, the symptoms became much more alarming; and Death, with his all-powerful grasp, snatched the young king from this mortal scene.

Those who are anxious for any further particulars respecting the life and last moments of this exemplary prince, will find a full account of him given in Bishop Burnet's "History of the Reformation." In the British Museum, as well as in the Library of the Trinity College, Cambridge, and indeed in other public libraries, are preserved several of King Edward's MS. letters and exercises, written in French, Latin, Greek, and English. Bishop Burnet says, "King Edward was an incomparable prince, and counted the wonder of his time. He was not only learned in the tongues and other liberal sciences, but knew well the state of his kingdom."

The present building known as Christ's Hospital occupies the same ground upon which formerly stood the Grey Friars. Stow, in his "Survey of London," gives some interesting particulars of the foundation of the Grey Friars, once such a rich and celebrated monastery. It was established in 1224, and for three centuries flourished amazingly. Kings, queens, and wealthy citizens were found among its various benefactors. Curiously enough, the name of Whittington is mentioned as the founder of the library in the year of our Lord 1249. Henry VIII., in changing monasteries into hospitals and religious schools, conferred a great benefit on his people ; but for the purity of this monarch's principles, little or nothing can be said. From a suppressed monastery we have Christ's Hospital, a royal foundation in more respects than one, since it has fed, clothed and educated many thousands of poor children. If you enter Christ's Hospital through the principal gates from Little Britain you have the grammar school on the right. This is a modern building. The interior forms one vast hall, fitted up with forms and desks. The head masters have separate rooms, called studies. The under masters are located in a kind of dwarf pulpit, but as their eyes at least appear above the sides, they can of course see whether the boys are diligent or idle. Opposite to the grammar school is the residence of the treasurer.

Moving forwards towards the steward's office, you see the writing school, a plain brick building over the lavatory. This, like the grammar school, is one vast room, and will accommodate easily about 500 boys. Here is a statue of Sir John Moore, Knt., in a niche on the outside, and an inscription which tells that the building was begun and finished by him Anno Domini 1694. That part of the foundation upon which these schools stand is called the Ditch ; so termed because the town ditch runs underneath it. I have thus far described this part of the building, because I recollect that it first of all attracted my attention when a New-boy. It is arranged for several boys to be admitted on the same day ; and it is amusing to witness the group of boys and parents collected together in the counting-house yard, awaiting the disposal of the necessary preliminary business. Some parents look very much more aristocratic and well-to-do than others, and unkind people say these predominate. Even the boys look at each other's jackets to discover the quality of the cloth. In a few hours all has changed ! All wear a coat of one coarse material, and if you seek for distinction it must be found in the schools. Apart, and in earnest conversation, I saw a widow with her boy, perhaps an only child,—and so it proved, for I afterwards made his acquaintance. That poor mother wept bitterly when she left her darling child. For years afterwards, whenever she visited her son, she never left him without weeping. I do not know where he is now, but if alive, I trust that he requites the kindness of such a fond parent. My father quickly made friends with some of the boys' parents, and so I was emboldened to do the same with the sons. Sympathy in our position, no doubt, very materially helped friendship.

After the parents have each given in the register of birth, the boys commence their share in the proceedings. This is rather a trying moment, because you must pass the first ordeal alone—that is to say, without the assistance of your parent.

“Now, boys, this way to the surgeon's room,” uttered in a

sharp tone, by a little brisk messenger-sort of beadle in uniform, at once informs you that process number two is about to take place.

Driving the boys before him, the beadle shuts you all in a room together, with the admonition that you are to strip for examination by the surgeon. This precaution is most necessary, in order to prevent unhealthy boys from being admitted. Without the exercise of this care the most disastrous consequences to the scholars might ensue.

While we are hovering about the counting-house, it may not be out of place to say a word or two on the subject of presentation. To some of the governors are awarded yearly, and to others triennial presentations. A presentation for admittance of a boy to Christ's Hospital may be either for a freeman of the city of London, or for a non-freeman. If, as it happened in my case, the presentation should be for a freeman, and yet given to a non-freeman, he must, in order to make it available, take up his freedom, unless by chance he can exchange it for a free one. Being made free of the city is attended with a few pounds' expense; but what is that compared with the advantage of an education at Christ's Hospital?

A list of the governors can always be obtained, for a small sum, at the counting-house. To this list are affixed stars against the names of governors having presentations for that year.

After the new boys leave the counting-house, they are conducted by one of the beadles to the wardrobe: here their transformation from mere boys to blue-coat boys takes place. It is a strange sensation which comes over you, when, for the first time, you encase yourself in corduroy breeches, yellow worsted stockings, and a toga-like coarse blue cloth coat; then the girdle of red leather has to be buckled, and the clerical bands to be adjusted. This latter portion of the antique costume is a perplexity indeed. We must not, however, forget the little round cloth cap. Of course, you make an attempt to wear it at first, but it soon finds its way to your pocket, where for ever

afterwards it mostly remains, or else quietly in your play-box. The long skirts seem awkward, but at play this difficulty is set aside by knapsacking the coat-tails with your girdle.

Much has been said about the dress of a blue, and some have even hinted at a change; but there really does not seem, to my mind, any sufficient reason why the dress should be modernised. Few will deny the picturesqueness and antiquity of the dress, and, in these days of change, something that recalls days of yore is rather agreeable than otherwise. One walks for hours in the city amidst a stream of human beings, black coats, black hats—a tedious monotony, which is occasionally very pleasantly relieved by a blue-coat boy and his yellow stockings. Not to animadver on modern costume, I must protest against either the elegance or utility of the common hat: and it is to be hoped that, ere long, some more desirable and comfortable substitute will be introduced.

Returning to the dress of a blue, I would suggest that the present useless cap should be superseded by the collegiate trencher. This would, I think, lessen in a great measure the liability of the boys to that troublesome, cutaneous head disease, ringworm. May not the prevalence of this disease arise in part from the exposure of the head to every variety of our changing climate? The trencher cap would certainly form a very good appendage to the monastic dress of a blue. After having completed your metamorphosis, you need not be anxious about your former clothes. The beadle looks after them, quietly appropriating the same as his perquisite. My father, however, disappointed this functionary. Being a careful man, he made inquiries for the clothes, and, with some little trouble, obtained them, much to the chagrin of my brother, who was two years my elder. It seems that he was obliged to go to school in my left-off clothes, in order to wear them out. To this day he tells the tale of being called his brother's ghost.

You are now fairly habited in the cloister garb, still follow-

ing the beadle, who conducts you to your appointed ward ; here you are delivered over to the care of the nurse, or attendant, and your name is entered by the Monitor on the list, as one of the boys belonging to this or that ward. It is the monitor's duty to call over the names of each boy every evening before prayers, and he is held responsible, by the steward, for any absentee.

The nurse now appoints you to a vacant bed, which you retain during your stay in the school. All the beds are numbered, and there are about sixty in each dormitory. At the present time there are eighteen wards or dormitories, which are dispersed in various parts of the building. These wards are large and well-ventilated rooms. The bedsteads are of iron, and they are arranged in rows. At the foot of each bedstead is an iron box, ycleped a settle, in which are usually kept blacking brushes, books, and playthings. These settles form a row of seats. Over every ward is appointed a nurse, to whom is confided the domestic charge of the boys. Her situation is by no means a sinecure ; nevertheless, she occupies a position in which she may make herself much respected. Her province is to take charge of the boys' clothes and linen, to attend in the hall at all the meals, and to keep the boys in proper restraint : in this latter duty she is assisted by the monitors, of whom there are three to each ward. The nurse is responsible for the health of her ward, and if, at any time, she observes a boy with any sign of sickness, however trivial, it is her duty to accompany the invalid to the Infirmary for examination, by the surgeon, or physician, as the case may be. The nurses are a very respectable class, being mostly selected from the widows of professional men. They reside in the wards, where apartments are provided for them. Beyond the customary duties of the nurses, it is understood that they undertake the care of the trifling washing, for which the governors do not pay : this consists merely of pocket-handkerchiefs and night-caps. Of course the boys

friends are expected to pay a small annual gratuity for this convenience. The nurses act also as bankers—that is to say, each boy's parents leaves a small sum in their hands for the weekly allowances.

The distribution takes place on Saturday afternoons, which, in consequence, we thought rather a jolly time. The weekly allowance generally averages from 3d. to 6d. each boy ; mine was 3d. ; some of the boys, however, had much more. Of course the cash is very quickly expended in either toys or pastry, unless, as it sometimes happened, one's weekly allowance was stopped to pay for salts of lemons to remove ink spots from shirt wristbands or bands. Salts of lemons must be a frightfully expensive preparation according to the price charged for it at Christ's Hospital. Besides a weekly allowance, a blue-coat boy has a great idea of "*tips* ;" nor does he much appreciate a visitor to see him, unless a silver token of regard is left behind. Sometimes a countryman struts into the playground with the view of seeing some neighbour's boy, with whose name he may only be acquainted. Being surrounded by boys all dressed alike, he is naturally a little puzzled. Presently he inquires for Morgan Lewis, or some other name. At once a number of voices shout out for Morgan Lewis, and after the visitor's ears have for some time carefully followed each echo, the young gentleman so much wanted appears. Of course this assistance to find the boy he is desirous of seeing involves the expense of a double tip,—one for his friend's child, and the other for the finder. If you are anxious to find a boy at Christ's Hospital, learn his height, general appearance, and to what ward he belongs. When I was in the school, there were several cases of twins ; and in one instance so much alike were the two brothers that mistakes in identity continually occurred. But to return to the nurses. We had remarked, that it was their duty to attend in the hall at meals.

It was really a very interesting sight to watch the nurses

enter the dining-hall, mostly surrounded by some of their younger charge, and generally escorted by one or more of the monitors, or leading boys. These latter always help the nurse to carve, and serve out the rations. Blue-coat boys highly prize the good-will of the nurses, and between them and the monitors it is of course important that a good understanding should exist.

A Monitor and Marker is a very important personage in the economy of the ward. The boys chosen to fill this office must have gained a certain *locus standi* in the grammar-school, and have attracted the attention of the steward for their good behaviour. This species of promotion by merit alone exercises a very happy effect, inasmuch as it opens a field of advancement to every boy. According to your attainments in the classics when you enter the school, so is your place in the ward, as also at the dinner table. In proportion as you make progress in your studies, and as new boys are received, so you advance step by step to the top of the table; and when you have arrived there, provided your conduct has been uniformly correct, the steward appoints you to be a monitor. It rests with the head grammar-master to name you as marker, but it rarely happens that he offers any objection to the recommendation of the steward, although such instances do occasionally take place. Immediately you are appointed monitor and marker, and have received "the seals of office," in the shape of a silver medal, which you are expected to wear on Sundays, suspended by a blue ribbon to the buttonhole, your newly-acquired dignity forbids your association with any but your equals. It is considered an act of condescension on your part to join in any of the games after your instalment. It was with no small amount of pride that I left the steward's office after my promotion; and the first time I paraded up and down the table, whilst the boys were dining, my attention was absorbed in an endeavour to discover whether the boys were awed by my dignified bearing, or amused at my

embarrassed deportment. As I was very short for my age, no doubt my strutting was very considerable. Monitors have a very arduous, and sometimes unpleasant office, for you are held accountable for all the misdemeanours committed in your ward. On the other hand, you have many privileges to counterbalance what is disagreeable. An extra quantity of rations, a cupboard to yourself, and a boy to wait upon you, are no mean comforts in the eyes of a school-boy. Moreover, you may sit up until ten o'clock, whilst the boys generally retire to bed at six o'clock in the winter, and eight o'clock in the summer. The boys hate this exceedingly, although I believe it is an excellent arrangement for their health.

The monitors' boy, or secretary, enjoys a sinecure ; for his office is merely to help himself to a lion's share of what the monitors leave : added to this, of course, he may sit up to attend to the monitors. This post is generally filled by a leading boy. Next to monitors' boy, comes monitors' boy's boy ; who is supposed to polish the shoes, and the bones as well, but in reality he only looks after the latter ; after him follows, in a descending scale, the veritable fag, or monitors' boy's boy's boy, who, for a cold potato, or some execrable wash in the shape of tea, undertakes to keep the crockery clean, scour out the cupboard, and is, in fact, a general scrub. His perquisites, if they warrant the name, are indeed hardly earned ; but then, of course, he has a chance of one day being monitors' boy number one, or perhaps even monitor.

We have now given some account of the wards generally, and it may not be here out of place to make mention of the infirmary or sick ward.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFIRMARY OR SICK WARD.

THE building known as the Sick Ward is situated at the back of the dining-hall, but quite detached from it. There is a play-ground, with sheds and seats for boys who are sufficiently well to take the air. From the upper end of the play-ground is a gateway, communicating with the area of Bartholomew's Hospital. This is very necessary in case of accidents.

The arrangement of the Infirmary is most excellent—the building being divided into small wards or dormitories, a lavatory, dining-hall, dispensary, kitchen, and nurses' and servants' rooms.

The medicines are all carefully exhibited, and the sick boy is dieted strictly according to the physician's instructions. A boy may be visited by his friends; but on no account are they permitted to interfere with the treatment adopted; and this precaution is very proper, otherwise it would frequently happen that all the attention of doctor and nurse would be useless. In cases of severe illness, which, however, are extremely rare, the patient is removed to a small room near the nurse's apartments, where, if necessary, he is most carefully watched day and night. It speaks well for the skill of the medical officers and the attention of the nurses, that fewer deaths occur at Christ's Hospital than in any other public school of the same dimensions. During my residence on the foundation only two deaths occurred. I am careful in detailing thus much upon the sick ward, because I know anxious parents are mostly fearful that their children may not have every care shown them at school, which in sickness becomes so necessary.



For some little time I was an inmate of the Infirmary, with intermittent fever, and, after a few days' confinement, my well-beloved playmate joined me. Poor H—— was seized with an attack of croup. He was placed in the long ward, and occupied the bed next to me. Strange circumstance this, at least I thought so then—in health we were chums, and in sickness neighbours. Sympathising in each other's ailments, we became greater friends. Poor fellow! although the inflammatory symptoms of his complaint were speedily subdued, the depleteive means adopted left his system in such a shattered state that he never fairly rallied, in spite of the most careful treatment. Oftentimes did I gaze upon his intelligent features, now so altered. Sometimes he would awake me with a start, and inquire whether I knew my exercise. His mind was much disturbed at times. The flickering rays of the feeble lamp fell on his sunken face, and shed a ghastly hue around: how different to the healthful flush engendered by the mirthful game! In sickness how the thoughts are changed, and how vivid the imagination becomes as the strength of the body decreases! To continue near my friend made me careless of returning health. However, the doctor pronounced me convalescent, and I returned to my studies. Under any other circumstances I should have rejoiced to rejoin my playmates; but the poor sick boy engrossed my every thought. To every inquiry the answer was, "Worse and worse." August arrives, and with it the holidays. The nurse kindly permitted me to bid my friend adieu—and a painful parting it was for both of us. I had some time previously lent him a book, which my sister had presented to me. He begged for it. Could I refuse the dying boy? I gave it to him. When I arrived in the country, my sister inquired for the memento of her affection, and seemed to think it very careless on my part that I had given it away. On my return to school, I almost feared to ask the fate of poor H——. He had died. The nurse told me that my name was frequently on his lips. She

then presented me with the book, which the dying boy committed to her care, to be returned to me.

Not a long time after the death of my friend it so happened that I was at the Infirmary again, but this time under very different circumstances. The governors having determined, if possible, to eradicate every trace of the ringworm so common in public schools, directed a general surgical examination to take place. For this purpose all the boys were assembled in the great hall, and underwent the searching eye of the doctor appointed for this purpose. No less a number than 100 boys were condemned, not to be decapitated, but to be scalped—*id est*, shaved. I was one of the unfortunates. But the mischief did not stop here. It was considered advisable to keep the affected boys apart. For this purpose a portion of the Infirmary was fitted up for us.

The very circumstances of our being isolated from the great mass of the boys, and in many instances all our little acquaintances severed, made us a rather reckless and irregular body. We no doubt presumed upon our unfortunate position; and it seemed to me that the officers were inclined to deal very leniently with us, considering some of our rather extravagant proceedings. One evening the boys of Ward E, about twenty-four in number, had made grand preparations for a grub-feast. Each boy was of course compelled to provide something, and what with sweets, lobsters, saveloys, shrimps, Yorkshire pudding, apples, bread and cheese, and nectar made of solution of liquorice, we had accumulated a tolerable mess of comestibles. The feast was to commence at midnight, when all was quiet. At ten o'clock the nurse made her usual circuit, and no doubt fancied that we were all fast asleep. On the contrary, we were never more wide awake. Under my bed, at the very moment of her nightly parade, were couched two or three *chefs-de-cuisine*, preparing the banquet. These truants from their own beds had practised a very

successful deception upon the old lady, by fitting into their several bolsters a nightcap, and then carefully placing them in bed. All the nurse was anxious about, was, that each bed possessed an occupant. "The witching time of night" having arrived, we left our beds, and surrounded the festive board with no common appetites. We cannot say that the glass passed freely, but the broken mug did, and we were proceeding gloriously, when, *en et ecce* (lo and behold), the latch was gently raised, and in peeped a strange face. With a precipitation in due proportion to the urgency of the case, we all scrambled into bed, and there awaited the denouement of this very unpleasant visit. Not many moments had elapsed before the door was again pushed open, and in walked a band of smugglers, in full battle array. They pounced upon the provisions; not a moment was to be lost, we jumped out of our beds, seized each one his bolster, and right well belaboured the besiegers. A furious battle for the spoil then began. Fawcett led on our party. We conquered. No doubt the adverse party suffered a defeat, from the fact of their men being half asleep. Our enemies were the boys of Ward F, the door of which was opposite to our apartment. It was found out afterwards that an Irish boy in our camp had given the enemy due notice of the feast, so as to get up a good fight. After this commencement of hostilities, the opposite wards had a great deal of border skirmishing; sometimes, indeed, we actually ventured to storm the staircase against the upper wards. At this time Cæsar's "De Bello Gallico" and the "Crusaders" were attentively studied, in order to find out skilful modes of attack and defence. It is surprising what school-boys will endure without suffering any ill effect. Only think of our turning out of our warm beds at midnight, without either shoes or stockings, scouting and fighting in the open passages, and that too on a stone floor. In after-life no enthusiasm would divest us of fear for the consequences for such imprudence. Amongst our many freaks as sick boys—what a misnomer! we

were only outwardly touched in the heads, not mentally—was one of quite a classic description. I refer to the Battering-Ram Plot, which will be fresh in the memory of any boy of my time who may happen to read this account of it.

It one day so chanced that repairs were necessary, and the play-ground was quickly overspread with scaffolding poles, ropes, mortar, &c. Now, as boys, having read a little of the classics, it was not very surprising that these building implements should suggest to us the formation of a battering-ram.* The idea pleased us amazingly, and a council of war was called together. It was unanimously agreed that each boy should take the responsibility of capture without impeaching his comrades. The *modus operandi* was quickly arranged, and the time agreed upon for an attack. The workmen went to dinner at 12 o'clock, and immediately afterwards we might safely commence, as we thought, but the sequel proved otherwise. Three scaffolding poles were quickly elevated, and fastened at the top ; from the apex we slung a fourth of larger dimensions. Behold then our destructive instrument of war ready for the campaign ! Having accomplished its formation, the next thing was to test its powers. An object soon presented itself in the shape of a mound of dry mortar ; the boys worked like Trojans, and it was quickly

* It may not be uninteresting to say a word or two upon the battering-ram of the ancients, or rather to let some of the authors who refer to this formidable instrument of war speak for themselves. Pliny says the battering-ram was invented at the siege of Troy, although Homer makes no mention of it. Perhaps the earliest notice of this engine occurs in Ezekiel, where the prophet speaks of a feigned siege of Jerusalem as a sign for the Jews. Ezekiel lived about 590 years B.C. The second verse of the fourth chapter of Ezekiel reads thus :—" And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it ; set the camp also against it, and set *battering-rams* against it round about." Again, at verse 22nd of the 21st chapter of the same prophet—" And his right hand was the divination of Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint *battering-rams* against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort." The next mention of a battering-ram is in the Peloponnesian war, B.C. 429 (Thucydides

destroyed. Elated with success and heated with excitement, we turned the battering-ram against a narrow passage to the Infirmary, called the Creek: this pathway was built of wood at the sides, and roofed with tiles. Amidst the plaudits of an admiring group, the destructive machine was worked with regularity and to some effect, for already the tiles came tumbling down. "I say, you boys," uttered by the head beadle, made hurry-scurry the order or disorder of the day. Our chief cried out, "Stand not upon the order of going,—but go." It was anything but a respectable retreat. The clock struck one, dinner was ready, and we all rushed in to take our seats, trying to look as if we expected nothing more than our noontide meal. Presently in walked the steward armed with pencil and paper, followed by the beadle in his robes of office. How fearfully formal it all appeared! The steward did not inquire who were the guilty parties; our anxious looks and dusty coats rendered his victims sufficiently prominent. When he had quietly taken down all our names, he suggested, sarcastically, that after dinner he would be obliged by our appearance in the hall, leaving us to enjoy our meal with "what appetite we might" under this untoward event. The dinner—what a mockery! as if we could eat in the face of such a dessert—being over, we were ushered

ii. 76)—"The Peloponnesians, moreover, brought engines, wherewith they played upon the city; one of them being placed close to the wall, beat down a large portion of the great building, to the dismay of the Platæans." Thucydides then relates in what manner the Platæans constructed an instrument to break off the head of the battering-rams. We have given a translation of the above, rather than the Greek text, not that we mean to infer any inability on the part of the boys, but simply to save them the trouble of referring to their Lexicons; and, besides, "children of a larger growth," who of course, in these days, all read Greek, may think it quite as satisfactory to see the account in English, although somewhat of the strength of the original may be sacrificed in the transmission of the narrative from one language to another. Who does not read Pope's "Homer's Iliad" in English verse with a great deal of pleasure? Yet there are to be found a few who say Homer cannot at all be appreciated through the medium of a translation. May there not be some affectation in all this?

into the presence of the steward. Heroes have been known to sleep well upon the eve of a great battle. Criminals generally rest undisturbed amidst the noise of preparations for their execution. To whatever reason it may be assigned, sure it is that our complacency was upset. The steward made a few vain attempts to discover the ringleaders; failing, however, he punished the culprits upon the principle of a dog having a bad name and being hanged. Those amongst the number who were particularly black upon the steward's books for old grievances were flogged, and the remainder received a caning. In this instance the canine proverb utterly failed, for it so chanced that the affair was designed by the boys least suspected. Our punishment on this occasion was considerably lightened by the general opinion that the affair was most gallantly and ably managed. Nothing of course must be said about the hasty and disorderly retreat.

Some very curious little incidents occurred at the sick ward. It was no uncommon thing for boys to make inroads upon the contents of the dispensary. Pulvis antimonialis (James' powder) has frequently been swallowed to produce sickness when a *Repetition Morning* has been in view. It was no uncommon thing for boys to feign a cough in order to secure a draught of cough mixture, *chacun à son goût*. These diversions did not interest me. The nurse of the touched-head department, who was a very nervous old lady, revelled in the delightful name of Mrs. Honey. Her husband's occupation was of a very non-descript character, and therefore he never seemed to be in the right place at the proper moment. He was evidently one of those unfortunate men who are not blessed with the organ of order. It mattered little, whether the boys were dining, playing, taking medicine, or going to bed, he was certain to be in hot water; and as his temper was by no means of the mildest kind, some amusement—it is too bad to say so—was afforded by its ebullitions. Of course there was some interesting matrimonial

squabbling occasionally, which was not likely to escape the notice of the boys. When anything of this kind occurred, we did not mend matters by crying out, "*Pater et Mater Mel—quid agitur.*"

Boys at the Infirmary are not allowed to wear Bands; thus if a bandless boy is seen in the customary playground, he is at once pounced upon, and trotted off to the Steward's office, there to give an account of his extra-mural wanderings. This is a very necessary procedure, otherwise boys not thoroughly recovered from fevers, would spread contagion among the healthy.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUMMONS OF THE BELL.

EVERYTHING at Christ's Hospital is strictly regulated by the ringing of a bell. Take the duties of one day, as a specimen of all. In the summer time as early as six o'clock in the morning this cloister monitor, the bell, awakens you. Then you jump up, all hurry, flurry; and if you are a little boy, as new boys are sometimes called, you do not find it an easy thing to dress quickly when some mischievous wight has sewn up the lining of your coat sleeve. Now there commences a grand cleaning of shoes and brushing of clothes. Presently you join in ranks, and proceed to the Lavatory. This building is deserving of some mention, not for any architectural elegance, for it possesses none, but for its general convenience for the purposes to which it is devoted.

The Lavatory is situated under the Writing-school. It is a long building, capable of accommodating 104 boys, besides beadle, nurses, and servants. On either side are arranged towels on rollers, one for every four boys.* Two troughs for water extend the entire length of the building. From these troughs emerge 104 taps, thus leaving one to each boy. Hot or cold water can be laid on according to circumstances. To each boy is apportioned a tap; consequently 104 boys can wash at one and the same time. Allowing to each set of 104 boys five minutes, it will easily be understood that 1,000 boys can wash in less than one hour. Of course fresh towels are supplied for each division.

Having finished the morning ablution, you return to your ward and await the seven o'clock bell for school. In the few

* Of late years each boy is supplied with a towel.

minutes which you have to spare, it will be wise of you to con over the lines of Virgil, or the rules of Syntax. Going to school before breakfast may be very proper, but I confess that I never relished it. There was an uncomfortable dreariness about it, especially when the mornings were cold. Eight o'clock—what a glorious hour!—the elasticity of one's spirit at that moment seemed to acknowledge no bounds. Our first rush was to the pastry-cook's. If you did not happen to have any money to buy hot cross cakes, you might at least tickle your appetite with a sight of those in a more enviable situation than yourself; and, what is more to the purpose, you might possibly come in for a share. At a quarter past eight o'clock the preparation bell for breakfast was rung; then a gathering of the boys would take place in the Hall, anxiously awaiting the morning meal. Breakfast being finished, you have a few minutes for play. Once more the bell at nine o'clock for school. Three long hours of study before you, and, perhaps, quite unprepared with your lesson. However, you fall to and study, and by some good piece of luck, you manage to scramble through your task. Scrutinising the clock (how long the time seems!), at last it strikes twelve, and then the bell tinkles—this time, at least, somewhat agreeably. At half-past twelve, and whilst you are enjoying a good game at hopping-over, chimes anew the preparation bell, for a second ablution. This accomplished, you wend your way to the hall for dinner. Prayers, praise, grace, dinner, and after grace, all follow in becoming order. Now a few minutes' respite, you can scarcely say play, and then the bell again. Two o'clock to school. If you spent the morning at the grammar school, you pass the afternoon in the writing,—and *vice versa*. To retrace our steps a little. If it should happen that your shoes are not in a very exemplary condition, you must sacrifice your *tempus ludendi* at twelve o'clock for a visit to the Cobbler's stall to be newly shod, or in other words, to have your shoes exchanged.

Persons who have for any length of time resided in a small country town, or village, must have remarked, for they thrust themselves into notice, certain restless spirits who are ever fermenting the affairs of the parish, or taking intense interest in the return of a popular candidate. Amongst these men you will invariably find Shoemakers. I recollect staying for some time in a small market-town which possessed four parish churches, and the clerk to each church was a worthy son of Crispin: and sure enough no community was ever composed of more antagonistic elements—church against dissent, Whig opposing Tory, to say nothing of numerous social factions, each cavilling with the others for precedence. Mind, we do not say that all this arose from the mere fact of the four churches being blessed with as many shoemakers for clerks; we merely call attention to the circumstance as being singular, leaving the why and wherefore to some more philosophical mind to investigate. Thus much preface about shoemakers in general, will pave the way to a notice of one in particular. Our cobbler at Christ's Hospital was a little dark ferocious-looking man about fifty years of age. He wore spectacles, which, however, did not improve his appearance. and he had a peculiar habit of scowling at you over his glasses, which was anything but gentlemanly. As boys, we considered his stare something quite dreadful. Long before I was a blue, I had heard of the fame of this despotic cobbler.

It is the custom for the boys to have new shoes from the wardrobe every quarter, but, as mostly happens, if the shoes are worn out between these seasons of renewal, they can be exchanged for others, but only during one hour in the day, from twelve to one o'clock. It is no exaggeration to say that the boys generally feared the fiery ordeal of exchanging their shoes, more than an appearance under any circumstances before either master or steward. Figure to yourself forty or fifty boys all scrambling to obtain good positions in the coda formed around the little court-yard, in which stood the cobbler's stall. Imme-

dately he arose from his seat, the most perfect silence reigned amid the ranks. With scrutinising eye he counted quickly the numbers assembled, and in proportion to the time he was likely to be detained, so did his ire increase.

Now was the moment to present arms, and shoes also; and that unhappy timid boy was to be pitied, who, through fear of encountering this examination, had deferred his visit until his shoes were in a hopeless condition for any further repairs. Woe be to any boy that, in a moment of suffering from cold, might have slightly damaged his shoes by placing them too near the fire. And there was good reason for disquiet on these occasions, for any report, by this little tyrant, to the steward, would constitute you "a slovenly boy," and as such you would have been stopped next leave-day. But even the obdurate heart of this striking personage (he kept a cane, and used it too) was not altogether adamantine. A nicely-turned compliment, or a few new quill-pens judiciously displayed from the coat pocket, would work wonders with him. A bold conversation would sometimes succeed. "Good morning, Mr. W——." Answer, a growl. "I hope your family is quite well, Mr. W——." A severe look. "Can I assist you, Mr. W——?" "Come here, you, sir, and help me to look out some shoes." Of course you rushed towards him most obsequiously, and busied yourself amazingly; the result would be a nice pair of shoes. In this brief and feeble sketch, many a blue might remember his visits to the cobbler's stall.

Let me see: we had disposed of the afternoon school-bell. Writing, arithmetic, reading, or making pens; Virgil, Cæsar, Delectus, or Latin Grammar, for three long hours—how very dreary sometimes!—and then you hear the five o'clock bell. Again, at half-past five, it rings for supper. The repast finished, you are allowed until eight o'clock before your ears once more listen to the vesper bell. Tired, dusty, and heated you reach your ward. Another visit to the lavatory. This time warm

water pours forth from the taps, and you wash your hands, faces, and heads. If you are too young to do it effectually yourselves, the nurse or servants will perform the operation for you. One night in each week every boy enjoys the luxury of a foot-bath. Without a bell this time, you return to your ward, hear the evening prayers, and go to bed. In winter time the morning bell does not ring until seven o'clock; you therefore escape school before breakfast. In the evening bed-time is fixed for six instead of eight o'clock.

On Sundays we had a little deviation from this regular course of things, but not much. We rose one hour later, but retired to rest at the same hour.

The Sabbath may be considered a very impressive day at Christ's Hospital, for the very buildings themselves seem to be imbued with a religious feeling. On Sunday, everything about the school is hushed into a consistent silence. The same cloisters that yesterday echoed the laughter of youthful gaiety, and beneath whose vaulted roofs scamper along the lightsome school-boy, on this holy day became a quiet avenue, where the boys form in ranks to proceed to church. It is expected that during the intervals of divine service, the boys will walk about in pairs; of course the monitors merely walked with monitors, and the Grecian with his fellow. In these hebdomadal walks might be discovered new friendships: on this score, it was quite a field of observation. As the hour of eleven approaches, the boys may be observed with Bible and Prayer-books in their hands, wending their way towards their appointed station under the cloisters. Here they fall into ranks, two abreast, awaiting the steward's approach, which is a signal to pass on to church. As little boys, we were terrified at the monitor's frowns on these occasions, and the very tinkling of his medal against the button produced a thrill in our minds. But listen, and the distant trampling sounds tell that the mass is moving forward. We are in Christ's Church; all arranged on seats, one above the

other, half way up the organ. The Grecians, monitors, and beadles are stationed here and there, to keep a vigilant look out that no little urchin drops to sleep.

Nothing is left without arrangement. The steward's pew is on one side of the gallery, and the matron's opposite. In the body of the church, in one pew, may be seen the Nurses, all dressed alike—black silk bonnets, and dark-blue dresses.

The general effect of the boys, all seated around the organ, is very picturesque; and at the moment they rise to sing the sacred hymn, or to repeat the responses in a clear and audible voice, the congregation feels that no ordinary school is joining with them in worship. Returning from church, the boys assemble in the hall for dinner. It cannot be too generally made known that, through the kindness of the governors, the public are admitted to the gallery of the Great Hall, to see the boys dine on Sundays. After dinner the boys assemble in the wards, and fill up the interim between dinner and church-time by reading in the Bible, examination in the Catechism and collects, and repeating the psalms sung at meals.

The monitors and markers of each ward are appointed to conduct this part of the religious exercises for the Sabbath; and, moreover, they are held accountable for the proficiency of the boys in this respect. The Grecians make a practice of visiting the wards at this time, and it is their duty to ask any questions they think proper, and to report, according to the answers, to the head classical master. A blue will never forget how earnestly the door-latch has been watched, fearing the approach of either Grecian or head master.

Three o'clock—afternoon service. Again to church, rather drowsy, certainly, but determined, if possible, to keep open your eyes; because, if it so happened that the weather was oppressive, and you were caught napping, there was a nice long task in store for you—some chapter of forty verses or more to get by rote. We had a plan of refreshing our drooping

spirits, by well saturating our thick woollen caps under the pump. They would take up a considerable quantity of water ; these we managed to slip into our pockets all soaking wet. During the service we could easily squeeze out some water into our hands, and pass the same over our faces, or bathe our foreheads with the damp cap itself. A draught of cold water in a desert is, no doubt, a great luxury ; and so it would be in a crowded church, especially when you are seated near the ceiling and inhaling a good amount of deleterious gas. Leaving the sacred edifice and rushing to the pump for a draught of Adam's ale followed each other almost as a matter of course, and it was not an uncommon thing to see a row of some hundred boys all waiting for a drink. Now it is supper-time, and you mount the hall-stairs once more. Upon the cloth being removed, and amidst profound silence, in walks the head classical master, in full canonicals, to deliver the evening lecture. Dr. Greenwood, who was head master at the time of my stay in Christ's Hospital, was particularly happy in the selection of texts and subjects for lectures—at least as boys we thought so—and most certainly we were, or considered we were, much improved by them. I listened with much more interest to his lectures than I did to the sermons at church. No doubt circumstances had something to do with it : the church service is rather long for a boy ; and in a crowded church, placed in seats near the ceiling, it is excusable if he becomes a little drowsy. In our fine lofty hall we could listen to the lecturer with comfort, and as Dr. Greenwood was never tediously long, our attention remained absorbed until the conclusion of his sermon.

The texts, I remember, were mostly selected from the Proverbs of Solomon. On one occasion he took these words for explanation, “ Go to the ant, thou sluggard : consider her ways and be wise.” At another time he chose, “ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” So much were we interested with the evening lectures, that many of us managed

to take very copious notes, and, by consulting together, could commit to writing a greater part of the discourse before bed-time. Leaving the hall, we retired each one to his respective ward, and so to bed. The monitors, assisted by two or three boys, had, however, one other duty to perform—that was, to fold and put away the coats and other wearing apparel.

It is worthy of observation, that all the days set apart by the Anglican Church to be kept as holy are passed exactly in the same manner as Sundays.

CHAPTER VI.

GRECIANS, SCHOOLS, CLASSES, BOOKS, ETC.

To thoroughly appreciate the word Grecian, as understood at Christ's Hospital, you must have been there. The casual observer would not notice any very remarkable difference between the Grecians and the other boys. Even a monitor, though vested with a "little brief authority," never presumes to associate with a Grecian, unless invited. If, as monitors, we were occasionally summoned to take tea in a Grecian's study, it was always looked upon as an act of great condescension on his part. A Grecian, in the minds of the younger boys, is associated with some cloudy ideas of a being who literally crams with Greek, and nothing else; and as they are never seen to eat in public, of course this opinion is strengthened by the circumstance. The very walk of a Grecian, as he silently struts along the hall, impresses you with an idea of his importance. Not a smile is to be seen on his countenance; and, as he passes by, the boys very respectfully make way for him.

The Grecians have a kind of brotherhood among themselves, and no doubt enjoy themselves amazingly. As soon as they had reached the upper end of the hall, they seated themselves, twelve in number, around their own table. Then the rigidity of their features becomes relaxed, and conversation flows very agreeably until the steward's hammer disturbs the pleasant party. Now one whose turn it is to read the prayers mounts the pulpit. As the table of our ward, No. 9, was immediately under the pulpit, one or other of our boys found out the Lessons and Psalms of the day. When a junior I had a great desire to try the effect of a view from the Grecians' forum, and so I

determined upon making a rush into the pulpit very early one morning. Nobody interfered with me for some time, whilst I was fumbling about in a terribly confused manner to find out the lesson of the day. The index denoted such a chapter in Eccl., and I searched again and again, but could find nothing of the kind. Affairs were becoming desperate—the steward had taken his place—the officiating Grecian was marching towards the pulpit. In my discomfiture I ran down the stairs and inquired of one of our ward, who generally looked out the lessons, where Eccl. was to be found. You may guess how I was teased for not knowing that Eccl. was an abbreviation of Ecclesiasticus. After this circumstance I had no very elevated idea of the pulpit.

One of the Grecians, whose turn it is to read the prayers, mounts the pulpit; whilst his colleagues take each a position in various parts of the hall. When the boys are all kneeling down to prayers, the nurses and Grecians alone standing, the effect is very imposing.

If the dress of a Grecian be carefully contrasted with the other boys, its superiority will be seen. These aristocrats are favoured with a small study to themselves, curtains to their beds, and sundry other luxuries. They have, moreover, the very enviable privilege of visiting their friends at any time out of school-hours; nor are they considered to require surveillance. In fact, the Grecian is almost upon an equality with the masters or steward.

Now comes the question, how does a boy become a Grecian? It requires no mean abilities, and no small amount of perseverance, to arrive at the class from which the Grecians are selected. As boys we had a lurking notion that a little patronage helped the choice. When it is taken into consideration that a boy has to work his way through five classes with an under master, before he is eligible for the lowest class of the upper school, named the “little Erasmus,” it will be understood that some-

thing has to be done to reach this point. Many boys leave the school at fifteen years of age without having accomplished even this promotion. Supposing, however, that you are in the "little Erasmus," you must endeavour to raise yourself another step, and then you become a "great Erasmus" boy. From this class monitors and markers are chosen. To this elevation I had arrived, when it was necessary for me, on account of my age, to leave the school. On this class there are generally some sixty or seventy boys. After an examination in the classics, a selection is made for a still higher class, and if successful, you are honoured with the title of Deputy-Grecian. This is a most important step, and indeed the last but one. If you distinguish yourself as a Deputy-Grecian, you may rest satisfied of being raised to the highest point of promotion in Christ's Hospital—that of Grecian. It is generally the case, that only those boys who enter the school at seven or eight years of age can have sufficient time to make the necessary progress for the candidature of a Grecian. In addition to the Latin, Greek, and French languages, the Grecians study Hebrew and Mathematics. A boy is appointed Grecian at the age of fifteen, and continues on the foundation until he is twenty years of age. At this important era, before proceeding either to Oxford or Cambridge University, the Grecian has to pass through a very severe, though, in some respects, agreeable ordeal.

On St. Matthew's Day (September 21st), before an assembled crowd of critics and friends,—let us hope in good nature that the latter always prevail,—each Grecian is expected to deliver a speech in Latin, Greek, French, or English. From those scholars who have matured for College, of course the best orations are anticipated; and disappointment rarely attends the expectation. The speeches are delivered in the great hall. But before describing this ceremony, let us say a word or two upon the earlier duties of the day. In the morning the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Governors attend Divine Service at Christ's

Church. The boys sing an anthem especially prepared for the occasion. The anthems are not printed, but clearly written by the boys, and some of them are very beautifully and tastefully decorated with penmanship. The monitors distribute the anthems amongst the principal visitors on such-like appointed days. The sermon on St. Matthew's Day is mostly preached by a clergyman who was educated at the school. Leaving church and arriving in the hall, where everything has been arranged for the orators and audience, you quickly take your place, and await the entrance of the chief visitors.

On either side of the hall are placed seats for those who have been fortunate enough to obtain tickets. The Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Governors occupy the centre seats at the upper end of the hall. To the right may be seen the masters and their families. In the centre of the hall is erected a stage for the orators. Now the all-important moment arrives, and the Grecians appear dreadfully nervous, especially the juniors who are to deliver their maiden speeches. It is optional with the boys whether they attend on these occasions, and but few take advantage of the permission. Indeed the accommodation is not very likely to attract a large assembly of the boys, consisting, as it does, of standing room on a table behind the speakers. Add to this, that you may, if you please, go out and see your friends, and those who have been blues know pretty well which course a boy is likely to adopt. The head-master acts as prompter, his place being as close as possible to the speaker. At the conclusion of the speeches, the Grecians walk about the hall with an extended glove to receive donations for their brethren who are leaving the hospital for the universities, and a very handsome sum is generally collected. I have sometimes thought that this money-begging business is hardly compatible with the wealth and dignity of the establishment.* At the termination

* "Salt" has been abolished at Eton.

of the proceedings, the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Governors, dine together in the court room. The following account of St. Matthew's Day, 1853, at Christ's Hospital, appeared in one of the daily journals :—

"Yesterday, being St. Matthew's Day, the annual orations were delivered in the Great Hall of Christ's Hospital, in the presence of the Lord Mayor. The 'Grecians' who held forth on the occasion were Messrs. Henry Ludlow, J. W. Doran, H. J. Jevers, and C. H. Perez, who eulogised the 'Royal Hospitals' in Latin, English, Greek, and French prose, and Mr. C. W. P. Watts, who uttered Latin hexameters on the subject of Liberia, and also an English elegiac poem on 'the days of Edward VI.'

"Nothing can be more a matter of routine than this old annual ceremony, for the orations are perpetual eulogies of Edward VI, the founder of the hospital, and merely received a variation this year through the melancholy death of the late head-master, Dr. Rice—a topic which was dwelt upon with much feeling by the juvenile orators. Nevertheless, the scene will always be interesting, even to those who have no particular sympathies with the persons chiefly engaged. The hall, which, though not particularly old, is in that old style which imparts a solemnity even to gay and trivial occupations, comes out in strange contrast to the visitor, who steps within its precincts from the very centre of modern London life, like a mediæval romance sprung up in the midst of the most commonplace reality. Then, as the visitor, unless he be the least punctual person in the world, is sure to arrive some time before the intellectual festivities begin, he has the diversion of seeing the rush of urchins in their quaint but not unpicturesque costume, as they hurry up the seats at the extremity of the hall, until they have all settled into a compact mass, ready to hear the learned achievements of their elder brethren on the rostrum below. The vigour with which these boys sang the National Anthem yesterday, displaying a waggish love of noise as well as a fervid spirit of loyalty, and the penetrating sounds of their approval, whether expressed by a 'Kentish fire' or the collision of the hands, were sufficient to stun delicate ears, but in their hearty joviality were not the less agreeable on that account. In the course of more than one speech the orator would point to this happy crowd as an instance of the well-working of good King Edward's foundation, and certainly it would have been difficult to find a more apt illustration of perfect felicity and good feeling.

"Of course, many persons will look upon all academical speeches as neither more nor less than unmitigated 'bores,' but, nevertheless, the orations at Christ's Hospital are well worth an attentive hearing. The themes are, to be sure, all but identical, and no great variety of treatment is possible, but the style of the prose and verse is uniformly good, and shows a creditable familiarity with the best classical models. The French yesterday sounded less like a vernacular than either the Latin or the Greek,

but it should be borne in mind that that is a sort of extra study, and we may add that the speech delivered in that language was one of the most eloquently written of the four on the same subject.

“The orators, it will be seen, are only six in number, whereas in previous years every ‘Grecian’ in the school had to say his say. The abridgment was made for the very simple cause that the entertainment was voted too long. All delights pall if too copiously administered, even the delight of hearing speeches in Christ’s Hospital—and hence the abbreviators may be commended as wise in their vocation.”

Since the melancholy death of the late head classical master, Dr. Rice, many very admirable and necessary changes in the course of studies have taken place, and others are about to follow. It is to be hoped that the present head-master, Dr. Jacob, will not relax in his endeavours to improve the education and bearing of the boys, particularly the elder ones. In all well-conducted schools the head boys should be fitted for society by being admitted to *domestic communication* with the principal, and this could be easily effected in the form of a weekly lecture or conversazione. I am aware that something of this nature is in contemplation, which should be seconded by the sanction and co-operation of the governors. Too often the efficacy of salutary reformation in public institutions is checked by the unfair trammels of precedent. It may be recorded, very much to the credit of the course of instruction adopted at Christ’s Hospital, that amongst the collegians at Oxford and Cambridge you will always find the blues honourably distinguished.

We will mention one other important duty which devolves upon the Grecians, and that is, to examine the reading-books of the boys. No scholar is permitted to possess a book that has not passed a Grecian’s scrutiny. If the book is not considered objectionable, the word “approved” is written on the title-page, and under it the signature of the censor. On the other hand, if your book is condemned, you lose it. As I never saw the *Index librorum prohibitorum* by which the Grecians were governed, I cannot pretend to enume-

rate the disallowed books. At any rate our scrutinisers would "approve" such books as "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," "Robinson Crusoe," "Tales of the Crusaders," "The Swiss Family Robinson," "Boys' Own Book," &c. &c. Speaking of books of amusement would, of course, suggest some remarks upon the schools and the books of instruction there used. At the period of which I am the feeble chronologist the Grammar School was situated in the *Ditch*, but was not such a handsome building as the present structure. Our head-master was Dr. Greenwood, and there were, besides, three under-masters. Dr. Greenwood had under his immediate care the Grecians, Deputy Grecians, Great and Little Erasmus. The books used were "The Eton Latin Grammar," "Phædrus' Fables," "Cæsar," "Sallust," "Virgil," "Terence," "Greek Testament," "Xenophon," and "Homer." Each under-master had five classes to instruct. The system of education in the grammar school has experienced much change, of late years, for the better, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Edward Rice, recently deceased, and the present head-master, Dr. Jacob.

In the writing school we had a head-master (Mr. Reynolds), two under-masters, and three ushers. Writing, arithmetic, and English reading were here taught. Now, however, great alterations have also taken place in this department, and some very satisfactory changes have been effected. Within the last few years arrangements have been made for teaching the French language, but at present they are only partially carried out. Without wishing to dictate to the governors any course of study to be pursued, surely it would be advisable to make modern languages, especially French and German, more prominent in the course of instruction. The dead languages should not be neglected, but certainly nine-tenths of the boys, in after life, are much more likely to require a knowledge of French and German.

The old mathematical school was built by Sir Christopher

Wren. The school-room was commodious and well ventilated. Over the school was built the ward appropriated solely to the sea boys. For many years past, however, all this has been altered. The mathematical boys were distributed long before I entered the foundation. Over the gateway of the mathematical school was a statue of King Charles the Second, and the inscription "Carolus II. Fundator, 1672," informed the reader that royalty also founded the school for sea boys. In the mathematical school the boys go through a complete course of nautical education. There are about seventy or eighty boys attached to this school, who are preparing for sea service. Each boy wears a badge, as it is called, or metal plate, on his right shoulder, which is an insignia of the particular foundation in the mathematical school to which he belongs. It may be the King's boys, or Mr. Stone's foundation. The sea boys have a kind of freemasonry amongst themselves, although distributed so far as the wards are concerned. Thus a grammar school boy must not even peep into the mathematical school; if he is bold enough to do so, he must be prepared to take the consequences of his intrusion. It is no exaggeration to say, that although I made several attempts to examine the interior of the mathematical school, I never succeeded in more than catching a hasty glimpse of globes, sextants, desks, and drawings. Of the latter one could see something, for the boys worked them during play hours, and were naturally proud of the compliments heaped upon them. Some of the drawings were, indeed, very nicely executed. Sometimes, with a view of peeping into the interior of the school-room, we feigned that some boy's friends wished to see him during school hours. The cheat being detected, left you pretty sure of punishment at some favourable moment. Fanning, or running the gauntlet, the hands merely being used instead of the handkerchiefs, is the mode of carrying out the sentence. The mathematical boys not only arrange themselves in a double file and make you pass

between them, but they follow you until you are lucky enough to find an asylum either in a ward or school. The sea boys eschew carefully any association with the boys of the grammar or writing school. In play, of course, they will join with the boys of their own ward, but in all cases where they can appear as separate, they prefer it. The sea boys, from some traditional idea that it renders them more fit for the hardships of a sea life, practise a *brusquerie* and daring which they delight to exhibit on every occasion. Thus as each ward is blessed with one or more of these embryo sailors, they were always selected as our captains in any expeditions of danger. Some fifty years ago, or more, the boys of King Charles's School carried matters with a very high hand,—indeed, so much so, that they became almost absolute masters. Some very extravagant tales pass current amongst the boys to this day, of the bold exploits of their nautical companions. One story is, that a sea, or rather river fight, took place on the Thames, between them and the boys of another celebrated London school. After much obstinate fighting and some exciting incidents, neither party was declared victorious. This event nearly ended tragically—one or two boys narrowly escaped drowning. But the whole affair is wrapped in considerable obscurity. That such a circumstance did take place is not improbable. Then there are a number of other tales told about singular and plural encounters with butcher boys, beadles, and others, in which, of course, the blues were always victorious. No doubt very extravagant incidents happened at the time we are speaking of, for then Christ's Hospital was a public thoroughfare from Little Britain to Newgate Street; indeed, I can just recollect it as such. "No Thoroughfare" has, however, of late years, very properly been displayed, and the gates are kept partially closed. If a sea boy was at any time destined to punishment, it was his endeavour and pride to bear the same without a murmur, and his quiet endurance was highly applauded. It is quite a mistake, how-

ever, to suppose that a boy's courage is in proportion to his calmness under punishment; physical causes have much more to do with this than anything else.

Sometimes a misunderstanding would arise between two wards, upon some breach of etiquette, such as that of a boy belonging to Ward 9 having been seen in Ward 10, or some slight insult offered from the boys of the latter against the former. Perhaps a question of precedence arises as to which ward should descend first to the lavatory. A slight question sometimes becomes a *casus belli*, as in State affairs, "from little causes great effects arise." Although our differences generally ended in words, there have been known some very furious encounters—ward against ward. We were once engaged,—that is to say, our ward,—in a terrific scramble to gain possession of a certain portion of landing in the general staircase to several dormitories. From time immemorial Ward 9 had enjoyed the privilege of placing their play-boxes on one side of the landing. One Saturday afternoon, to our great astonishment, the boxes were all replaced by those of Ward 10. Of course, our dignity, not to mention our convenience, was offended, and we determined to try the question. Councils of war were held by either party. The boys of Ward 10 took possession of the landing—we decided upon a siege: collecting together all our forces, and placing the little boys in the rear, with a captain behind to urge them on, we made a desperate rush up the stairs. The besieged held out uncommonly well, and for some time victory was doubtful—

"Thus like the rage of fire the combat burns;
And now it rises, now it sinks, by turns."

Ignoble finish to our glorious war—a cry of "Here comes the beadle!" put a stop to what appeared certain success for our party. This skirmish, notwithstanding the beadle's interruption, was sufficient to leave us for ever afterwards in undisputed

possession of the landing. When this little affair took place I was what is termed a little boy, and was pressed into the service of this assault, *nolens volens*. Amongst the sea boys, a division of opinion once took place, and from words they went to blows. Considerable excitement was displayed by the parties concerned, as well as amongst the boys generally. Each party selected its Hector and Achilles. The bustle which now ensued in preparing for the affray was carried on with great vigour. Nightcaps stuffed with sawdust, handkerchiefs twisted into knots, leathern girdles, pieces of rope, and other articles of warfare, were eagerly sought and distributed to the contending hosts. A secluded corner under the cloisters was selected for the field of battle, where

“The thronging troops obscure the dusky fields,
Horrid with bristling spears and gleaming shields.”

Outposts having been appointed to watch the beadle, the armies rushed impetuously forward. It was capital fun for the spectators, however much the parties immediately concerned might have enjoyed it. Those in the corner appeared to me to be soundly cudgelled. Certain it is that all the belligerents fought with most determined bravery. Matters seemed equally balanced, and, in fact, nobody could say which party was gaining ground. From time to time, one or other of the combatants came from the affray in a limping and disabled condition. Some ugly thumps were given and received. It was not exactly playing at warfare; if so, it was indeed “dog’s play.” It is true that neither army could boast of much “pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war,” but each party was most zealous for the other’s defeat. Glory, the hackneyed word of armies, ancient and modern, was truly in this case the sole incentive for the soldiers now struggling for the mastery. Never were armies less actuated *per oro e per argento*. The battle rages—the crowd



THE BATTLE OF THE CLOISTERS.

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increases—all is confusion. I never could understand why beadles did not appear.

“Now night her course began, and over heaven
Inducing darkness, graceful truce impos’d,
And silence on the odious din of war.”

It might be very politic for the contending armies to talk, in their despatches, of the night coming on, beating honourable retreats; but in this instance the truth must be told. The bell ringing for supper was a sound too potent to be disregarded:—

“Behold a wonder ! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass earth’s giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless.”

The evening meal being ended, we went to bed, and dreamt “of moving accidents by flood and field.”

CHAPTER VII.

MEALS, TRADES, BUTTERY, CAKE SHOPS, MONEY CHANGERS.

IN the preceding chapter we have dwelt upon the studies pursued in the various schools; we will now descend from mind to matter, and give some account of what we ate and drank at Christ’s Hospital. Some folks may consider this of little consequence, but to satisfy others who may feel interested upon a subject of so much importance, we will spread before them the daily bill-of-fare for one week.

Dr. Johnson* considered the dinner-hour as the most important one in the day, and most undoubtedly it is. Few will confess it, but all men are much governed by this meal. Many a hasty decision has been given before dinner, that would have

* See “Art of Dining.”

been rescinded after that meal if possible. Depend upon it the stomach is and has been a very mighty arbiter. The dismissal of a minister of state, the fate of a kingdom, the horrors of war, may often depend upon an attack of dyspepsia. But to our subject.

Collecting together in the great hall for breakfast, each boy's allowance was half a twopenny loaf, and half-a-pint of milk and water; and if it so happened that you had been sufficiently fortunate to secure some hot cross-cakes before entering the hall, you would not find the bread and milk and water very inconvenient. If, as it generally happened, you had not broken your fast with anything, why then the morning meal did not interfere with your studies.

Emerging from school, and having obtained a very keen appetite from a good game at prisoners' base, or *hopping over*, you gladly answer the summons of the dinner-bell.

All meals are preceded by prayers, singing, and a grace. There is also a certain form to be gone through on every occasion, therefore one example will speak for all.

At one o'clock a stream of blue coats and yellow stockings is seen pouring on towards the hall. Now a bustling scene ensues. Here boys are spreading cloths, there others are arranging the wooden bowls. Walk up to a group and listen to the discussion which appears so animated, and you will be surprised to hear a boy offering his dinner for sale. You may rest assured that the auctioneer has just been dining off the contents of a nice cake, or some other eatable, that has been sent to him. Such bargains, under such circumstances, are not unfrequent. The peculiar hum of so many voices echoing through the dining-room, reminds one of the sound that reaches the ear from Cheapside when you are on the top of St. Paul's. In a few minutes the Grecians arrive, and the noise is slightly hushed, especially amongst the smaller boys, who regard a Grecian with peculiar awe. But who is this that walks in so

steadily, glancing with an eagle's eye upon the ranks as he passes through them? It is the Steward; and it is curious how the clatter ceases from the door when he enters, until the top-most tables are hushed into a whisper. The Steward is one of the most important and responsible functionaries upon the foundation. He arrives at his table, which is situated in such a position upon a raised platform that all may see him. By his side is seated the Matron. It is customary for both these officials to be present at each meal.

After a few moments' pause, the Steward strikes the sounding board on his table with his hammer, then is heard a shuffling of feet, a rumbling of platters and knives. The boys have now arranged themselves in lines at their several tables. Another strike reverberates along the lofty and beautiful roof, which produces a most perfect silence, then once again, and for the third and last time, falls the hammer. Thereupon the Grecian whose turn it is to do duty mounts the pulpit, which is exactly opposite to the Steward's table, and reads a few verses of the psalm appointed for the day: this ended he commences the prayers, and the whole mass of nearly 1,000 boys fall upon their knees. Having finished the prayers, the beautifully sonorous amen is heard, not after the fashion of the parish clerks. You are startled by a noise, nothing more than the boys rising, and one voice leads off a psalm of the good old version, not the modern parody. After this a grace is said, and once more amen, and then the bustle of carving, helping, and eating begins.

The dinners for each week are arranged as follows:—

Monday.—Roast-beef, the quarter of a twopenny loaf, three small potatoes, with small beer and water *ad libitum*. The *ad libitum*, it must be understood, merely refers to the table-beer and water.* Of the meat, &c., you have only the allowance.

* The small beer has been lately discontinued, by which the boys lose little or nothing.

Tuesday.—(Called by the boys starvation day.)—You have merely plum-pudding and a quarter of a twopenny loaf with butter; fluids as before.

Wednesday.—Roast-beef, bread, and potatoes.

Thursday.—Roast-beef, bread, and potatoes.

Friday.—Roast-mutton, bread, and potatoes.

Saturday.—Pea-soup, as much as you please, and one quarter of a twopenny loaf with butter.

Sunday.—Roast-beef, bread, and potatoes; and in the summer season, cold meats with salads.

The present bill-of-fare is a decided improvement upon what it formerly was, as also is the adoption of plates for wooden trenchers.

On the Wednesday following Ash Wednesday, the boys have a treat of boiled pork and peas pudding, and occasionally roast-veal or pork are substituted for beef or mutton. These changes in the diet occurring so seldom are looked upon as banquets, and many boys, for months before the day appointed for these extra meats, have bartered away for a high consideration their dinners at those times. I have frequently given a poor fellow a portion of my luxury, who has been so unfortunate as to be dinnerless on these looked-for occasions. Sometimes we made a collection for the unhappy improvident individuals who had sold their dinners.

The evening meal consists of half a twopenny loaf and a piece of cheese, and on Sunday evenings butter is substituted for cheese. The butter, moreover, is made up into little pats, after designs of the most approved dairy fashion. The plum-pudding, which forms the *pièce de résistance* of the Tuesday's dinner, is not of the usual form. Each pudding is steamed in a long circular tin. Against these puddings the boys hold, what in truth appeared to me, an unjust crusade. I suspect prejudice exercises an undue sway in this pretended dislike. Custom is everything, and it is *la mode* amongst the boys to abuse the puddings. Now plum-puddings, so-called at boarding-schools,

are mostly tremendous deceptions. You are an extremely lucky fellow, and the envy of your school-fellows, if you succeed in finding a plum; whereas our plum-puddings were good honest ones, and in flavour really very nice. In their composition appeared plenty of suet, plums, sugar, and spice. The ordinary school plum-puddings are unworthy of the name; they should be called Norfolk dumplings, or Australian dampers; and many a poor emigrant, I suspect, well knows what they are. The Matron, good soul, took great pains to break down the prejudice against the plum-puddings amongst the younger boys; with the upper boys she considered the attempt hopeless; and, in order to strengthen her arguments, she would partake of a small portion. Amongst the little boys there was always a disposition not only to eat their own share, but also the leavings of the elder boys; but then we were deterred by the foolish etiquette which predominated. On Tuesdays there was a great deal of "throwing out," as it is termed, which means placing anything in the middle of the table that one does not feel disposed to eat. Having been once deposited there, the viand becomes the property of any hungry boy that can secure it. It is a common practice with the boys when their appetites are particularly keen to despatch hastily their own portion, and then carefully watch the centre of the table for any discarded piece.

The dinner being concluded, suggests that somebody must clear away. For this purpose there are boys appointed who distribute amongst themselves the Trades.

There is no doubt that the most perplexing circumstance to a new boy, after an introduction to his ward and associates, is his appointment to a trade. If he is very little, most likely his first employment will be bearer of the candlesticks, or salt-boy. Your duty in the latter case is a very light one, and is mostly conferred upon a nurse's favourite. All you have to do is to bear the salt-bowl to the hall, and to serve out the salt. If the trades had a motto of course, the salt-boy would select

“*Sal sapit omnia.*” Some of the trades are much sought after, whilst others are considered a nuisance. For instance, the trencher-boy, or meat-bearer, can always command an extra supply—besides the patronage of allowing a chum a nice rub of gravy for his crust. Then the bread-boy can manage to make of his allowance something extra, for when one speaks of half a twopenny loaf, it is possible that the two halves may not be measured with mathematical precision. One loaf is intended for two boys, and to be fairly cut; but still the knife might slip, and so increase the allowance of A at the expense of B. Bearer of the potato-pail is not considered *infra dig.*; and a few extra hot potatoes on a cold day are not to be despised. Strange to say, what is considered very menial elsewhere, is here an office eagerly sought after. I refer to the knife-boy. It is his duty to clean the knives and forks, and he is accountable for their safe keeping. For the proper management of this office, the knife-boy is permitted to have a ticket of leave to see his friends every Saturday afternoon. Upper boys generally hold this office, and engage a fag to do the real work. To keep clean sixty sets of knives and forks must, of course, hold somebody well employed during play hours. There are a great many trades which are not by any means at premiums—such as cloth-boy, beer-boy, water-carrier, bowl-boy, plate-boy, and others. These fall to the share of the new comers. It is quite impossible to escape passing through a kind of apprenticeship in some of these trades.

Each boy makes his own bed, and cleans his own shoes, or is supposed to do so; the monitors and Grecians always excepted. After having passed through the ordeal at Christ's Hospital, one feels tolerably independent of servants in after life, for there are few ordinary matters of which a blue-coat boy is ignorant.

It is rather amusing to witness the various trades entering the hall to make preparation for dinner. A keen observer could easily detect, from the haughty bearing of the boys, what

trades were considered as honourable occupations. See with what *nonchalance* the bread-boy poises the huge basket upon his shoulders, and marches to the head of the table; then, with a practised twist of the wrist, he brings the basket safe to the ground. If, in performing this manœuvre, he happens to upset any of the bread, which is rarely the case, it is considered a *gaucherie*.

Once more, regard the conscious pride and aristocratic gait of the meat-bearer, who, with the burden on his head, feels himself evidently dignified by his office. This boy, in contradistinction to the multitude, makes his little cloth cap very useful. It is for him an excellent baker's pad.

Who are these boys running in so briskly, with the clean wooden pails? Look at their hands and pocket-holes, and you will find them both smeared, more or less, with mealy potatoes; undoubtedly, they carefully evade the waxy ones, as we called the watery potatoes. Yonder are two little urchins dragging along the trencher basket; but certainly not *con amore*, for to them no perquisite belongs. Stay, be not too hasty in your decision—to them even is reserved an occasional scrap or two, particularly if they are quick in clearing the tables, for by these means an unpicked bone may be sometimes secured. However, it is an office little congenial to the boys. The same remark applies to the curator of wooden bowls, and the beer and water boys. The table-beer at Christ's Hospital is very small indeed, and offers no great temptation to the cellarmen.

One highly-favoured office is in great demand amongst the little boys—that is, the agreeable duty of accompanying the nurse to the hall, bearing her carving knife and fork. Your reward is an occasional cup of tea in the parlour, which is very delightful; and perhaps nurse's children, with whom you play, remind you of brothers and sisters at home.

The monitors appoint the various trades, and the boys of each trade are accountable for the articles confided to their care.

The good behaviour of the boy, or his proficiency in the grammar school, very properly influences the monitors' choice in apportioning the trades.

Under the cloisters of the great hall, and nearly in the centre, is a thoroughfare to the Infirmary—to the right of this may be seen a door with "Buttery" plainly marked upon it. This *sanctum sanctorum* was under the immediate guardianship of three boys, appointed by the steward. These boys were always monitors, and, very luckily, one happened to be my fellow monitor. The senior buttery-boy manages the bread department; the second is clerk of the dairy, and keeps the accounts of the butter and cheese; whilst the third is head cellarman, and looks after the beer.

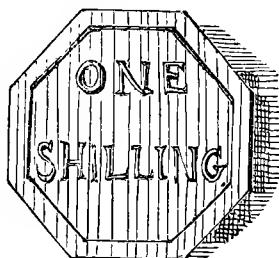
These boys are, *de facto*, the steward's clerks, and for the trouble which their duties impose upon them, they have the privilege of a ticket to see their friends on Saturday after dinner. It is decidedly an advantageous circumstance to have a buttery-boy belonging to your ward. To be selected by the steward to fill this office is considered a very high honour. The steward, of course, provides all that is necessary for the daily consumption of the boys; but he leaves the after-weighing entirely to the buttery-boys. I have observed that in our ward the head monitor was a buttery-boy, and a very clever fellow he was at figures. His penmanship also was unexceptionable. These steward's boys have the command of many advantages—such as an extra quantity of rations, a choice of the best tap of table-beer, and sundry other little perquisites which were very seasonable. When you fill this office, you can easily talk of a dinner party last week, with some truth as well as swagger. On Thursday afternoons, we often knocked up a snug little "*réunion*" in the buttery: *carte*—cold roast leg of mutton, cold boiled potatoes, fresh beer, cheese, and celery. We always had two or three boys to wait at table—their remuneration being the remains of the feast.

A buttery-boy is permitted to have an occasional substitute, and I have often acted in this capacity on Saturday afternoons, when my friend was anxious to see his relations. With some assistants, I frequently undertook to weigh out the potatoes in the kitchen for the Sunday's dinner. The kitchen is, as may be imagined, on a large scale. It is situated under the dining-hall, on a level with the cellars, and is fitted up with ovens, coppers, and steam apparatus. The *cuisine* is under the management of a chief cook and servants, and everything is kept in most excellent order. In weighing out the potatoes, you allow half a pound for each boy, and a few pounds extra for waste. Each ward has two nets with metallic labels, on which is engraven the number of the table. These nets are placed in steamers over the coppers ready for the next day. The meat is all weighed and placed ready for the ovens; in short, everything that can be arranged on Saturday is done to lessen the duties on Sunday.

We have already adverted to the management of the general kitchen, although some cooking was carried on elsewhere, as we shall presently show.

For the convenience of the boys, there are two confectioners' shops in the buildings, at which almost anything in the shape of eatables can be purchased. The keepers of the shops also supply needles and thread, tops, writing-paper, and an endless variety of articles which the boys are likely to require. At eight o'clock in the morning the shop becomes a kind of exchange, surrounded as it is by a crowd of eager applicants for hot cross-cakes. Like any other bourse, however, a great many ruinous transactions take place. For instance, a boy is very eager for one or more of the smoking cross-cakes, and he pays a terrible interest for the accommodation of a little ready coin. Boys who are in full tip prefer puff delicacies, which, under ordinary circumstances, can only be attainable now and then. A peculiarity exists in reference to the currency of the shops which

deserves particular mention. It is illegal at Christ's Hospital for the boys to make purchases outside the gates, and indeed there is little chance of doing so; for a boy must not retain in his possession any of her Majesty's coins unchanged. In a retired spot near the lavatory resides the money-changer, and to him you must apply for the hospital coins, before you can purchase anything from the shops. Thus, for your bright silver shilling, the money-changer would give you sundry copper coins of an octagonal form. Curiously enough, when I was in the school, this business of exchange was arranged by a Mr. Dunn. In spite of this name, however, he was a very worthy man, and witty withal. His doggerel rhymes, when in attendance at the lavatory, were exceedingly amusing to the boys. When I gave up my first shilling for an ugly copper coin, the exchange seemed to me most unsatisfactory. Let me recommend to numismatists to obtain a few of these coins



that have been in use for a number of years, and no doubt their peculiar form might puzzle the learned in such matters. At any rate, it would open a wide field for conjecture, as they do not bear any date. Neither Spanheim, Ruding, Eckhel, Goltz, nor Pinkerton,

so far as I am aware, make any mention of these coins. Hastening to the cake shop, I soon found a circulating medium for my uncouth-looking piece of metal. It purchased the correct quantity of "grub," wherewith I treated my brother *crugs*.

Notwithstanding all the precautions, we did sometimes manage to purchase commodities outside the gates, and, we imagined, with greater cheapness. It is very possible that the confectionery and playthings did pay a sort of *octroi*. If you dine in Paris the charge is very different from what it would be outside the barriers.

Yorkshire puddings, saveloys, muffins, crumpets, and sally-

luns were very popular amongst the boys. But the greatest treat was a plum-pudding, made from our own recipe, untrammeled by any laws of domestic or other cookery books. Perhaps my readers would like the receipt. Here it is: to any number of eggs and to any quantity of flour, given or purchased, add plums, currants, and sugar, according to the state of your exchequer. Borrow the nurse's saucepan, and bribe the servant to let you boil it on the kitchen fire. This last item generally costs more than the pudding itself. Among the monitors, toasted cheese formed a favourite luxury for supper. They used a frying-pan, and when the cheese was in a state of fusion it was spooned out, and spread upon toast after the most epicurean fashion. How we younger boys kept awake by the luscious fumes of the cheese, watched the monitor's boy dealing out the delicious stuff: and how we envied the happy mortals who were about to partake of it! Sometimes on leave-days, if for any misdemeanor we had been stopped, our consolation consisted in clubbing together and making a brewhouse, so spelt, and so called in blue-coat parlance; but I believe there is some dish of the kind mentioned in Dr. Kitchener's cookery book. There were mostly some six or eight partners in this jollification under adverse circumstances.

First of all, we procured a quartern-loaf, immersing the same in a kettle of boiling water; after a few minutes' ebullition, the loaf was turned out into a large wooden platter, steaming hot: milk and sugar were added *ad libitum*; and the result was a very tempting mess to hungry, disappointed boys, besides being by far the most economical treat our finances could afford.

In our ward, a very kindly feeling existed between the nurse and the monitors, and so we could at any time command a variety of little privileges to add to our comforts. In some wards, either from the peculiar temperament of the nurse or the odd disposition of the boys, feuds existed. The nurse had it in her power to sadly inconvenience the monitors and to curtail their little domestic comforts; whilst, on the other hand, the

latter could retaliate in a very successful manner. For instance, the nurse objects one night to the monitors having the frying-pan : the next evening she has a few friends to tea. Now, it is the duty of the nurse to be present at evening prayers—but before these commence, the monitor must call over the names. Very well ; our young gentleman calls them over as slowly as possible, whilst worthy madam is in an agony of fidgets to rejoin her friends. Follow this up by reading a very long chapter with due emphasis ; then give the boy that commences the psalm an idea that you would prefer the old 104th for that evening. The verses, as you know, are long, and the time very slow. Read the prayers carefully, and not so fast as if you were hurrying for your own supper. A combination of these delays will not tend to improve the nurse's proposed comfortable evening.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN former times the Bluecoat Boy had a holiday every red letter day, but now a different arrangement is made. Every other Wednesday, the birthdays of the Royal Family, and some of the Saints' days, are now yielded to the boys as leave-days. At Easter a fortnight is ceded to the boys for absence from school. The early part of the Passion week, which is also called clothing week, is occupied by fitting on and giving out new clothes.

At Whitsuntide one whole week's relaxation from study is permitted.

Something like ten days' holidays are allowed for the festivities of Christmas. Thursday afternoon is a quarter holiday—that is to say, the boys leave school at three o'clock ; and on Saturdays it is a half-day leave.

Who that has been a Blue does not remember the joyous feelings with which we ushered in the month of August, "crowned with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf." What chalking of walls in June and July, and making of Almanacks. The general reader should be informed that a few years back Bluecoat Boys were only permitted to enjoy one month's leave of absence, and August was the month selected. It will easily be understood that the advent of this month is hailed with peculiar delight. We very much question whether the annual rise of the River Nile is more anxiously looked for by the Egyptians, than August is at Christ's Hospital—not only by the boys, but also by the masters and officers in general. There is some form connected with this leave of absence. It is necessary to have a printed permission of absence from the steward, which contains certain restrictions. It has been remarked that in each ward there are sixty beds. Now, two months before August, *turning over* commenced. This is nothing more or less than turning over the bed and occupant of number 60. The bedsteads are all numbered in each dormitory. My *turn* to-night, and yours to-morrow, were expressions frequently used as August approached, and were well understood. I believe the intensity of the *turn* increased as the holidays approached; nor was that an unnatural result. Occupants of the earlier numbers generally kept awake, and, when their turn came, gently guided their overthrow, and so escaped coming in contact with the iron bedstead. Any boys undertook the office, and none were permitted to escape,—excepting sometimes monitors and big boys.

The morning of departure arrives, and all the bustle and running to and fro which usually accompany such occasions seem to pervade every nook and corner of the establishment. The boys vie with each other in making the earliest arrangements for leaving. This very naturally increases the hubbub and confusion. My case was one of intense anxiety, for it so

happened that it was towards the latter part of the day before the coachman sent for me and my luggage. Speaking of luggage, I should observe that each boy is supplied with a sufficient quantity of clothes and linen for one month. These are all sewed together in his coat, which is turned inside out on this occasion. The first August, labouring under the excitement of seeing nearly all the boys leave early in the morning, and myself uncalled for, I became, in consequence, very fidgetty, and, taking the worst view of the matter, thought, of course, that my father had forgotten all the arrangements needful for securing me a place by the coach. Acting under this delusion, I was at some little expense and trouble in obtaining a seat on another coach, which left London a little earlier. As we were rattling along the streets, I fancied that I had done a very clever thing, but as soon as I had reached my native town, to my great surprise, nobody met me at the inn. Thinking this a bad omen, I felt a little uneasy—besides I had not sufficient money in my pocket to pay the coach hire. Fortunately the coachman was satisfied with my name, and so tucking my bundle under my arm, I trudged home as quickly as possible. Of course my friends were glad to see me, but then “how did I come,” each one inquired. An explanation followed, and the only inconvenience which occurred was the payment of two coach fares, as my father had arranged for me to come by the rival coach.

Amidst all the enjoyments of life I do not think there is one so purely unalloyed as a school-boy's holiday. The school breaks up for the holidays, and for a time the boy abandons himself to all the wild vagaries of thought and action. Tasks, cares, and scenes that have engaged his attention for months, change in a moment to bright anticipations of smiling faces, welcoming his visit. If at such a time any pang is felt, is it not when one bids farewell to the friendless boys left behind?



At the Bluecoat School there are always some few boys under the denomination *friendless boys*, who, perhaps, having no friends in England, or, it may be, none anywhere, do not leave the foundation. Poor fellows! their lot seemed very hard. All human pleasures are finite, and holidays, however protracted, must end. Then comes black, or funkling Monday. It was always ordained that the boys should return on Saturday and resume their studies on the Monday. What a dreadfully dreary business this returning to school was! but yet some of the boys enjoyed it—I mean the *friendless boys*: they were wild with enjoyment at this unhappy season. In contrast to leaving for the holidays as early as possible, so we planned to return late, and the boy that contrived to arrive last was looked upon as having outwitted his fellows.

As the boys were returning they would immediately upon their entrance through the gates find the friendless boys, now looking so cheerful, ready to greet them with satirical endearing names. “*Dans l’adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons souvent quelque chose qui ne nous déplaît pas.*”* (In the adversity of our best friends we often find something which is not displeasing to us.) “Hot rolls and coffee!” was one of the cries: “Shall I clean your honour’s shoes to-morrow morning?” was another. Anything that could remind us, unhappy mortals, of the homes and comforts we had just left, was now sounded in our ears by the friendless boys.

“. . . . Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice,
Nella miseria . . .” †

(No grief so poignant as the remembrance in our misery of happy days.) The full import of these words was felt when we returned to school. September is a beautiful month, and it was generally on the 1st or 2nd that we recommenced our studies. The morning air in the latter part of autumn begins to be cold

* Rochefoucauld.

† Dante.

and bracing, and the game in vogue at this season was that of whipping tops. It was well that our drooping spirits were called into activity by this amusing game. The cloisters soon rang again with the noisy mirth of the boys, and all went smoothly on for another period of time. Leave-days are holidays that occur on particular occasions, when it is permitted for each boy who can prove he has friends in London to visit them. He may leave the school in the morning as early as eight or nine o'clock, and in summer time need not return until eight, or six o'clock in the winter season. These are the halcyon days of a blue, and serve as a comfort to him under all the disagreeables of tasks and repetitions. It was quite pleasant on the eve of a leave-day to debate in your mind what friend you should patronise, and then pop upon him suddenly. Of all the people to visit as a blue, select those, if you are so fortunate as to know any, who have had a member of their family educated in the school, as they best understand your wants. You may be very welcome amongst your friends generally, but a brother *crug* puts you down at once to a substantial breakfast or luncheon, and when you leave in the evening does not forget to fill your pockets with grub, and perhaps a little coin as well. The memory of one old gentleman, who had a son educated in the school, comes vividly before me as I pen these particulars. He was a thoroughly good-natured soul, and moreover extremely fond of children, particularly blue-coat boys. When it was time to bid adieu to the old gentleman, he always took me into his warehouse, and literally filled my pockets with plums, currants, almonds, sugarcandy, and all sorts of nice things ; and I feel persuaded that the pleasure he derived as a "cheerful giver," was not equalled by me as receiver. Sometimes boys that are chums accompany each other by turns, to their friends' houses, and curious and interesting acquaintanceships often arise from this circumstance.

When the boys return at night to their respective wards, it is the duty of the monitors to call over the names. On

one occasion I was pursuing my duty as monitor, when, to the surprise of all, no response was given upon my calling out a name. As the boys after a day's leave return rather fagged and very sleepy, it would require something extraordinary to arouse them. Here, then, was the very stimulus. All was uproar immediately. It so chanced the missing boy was a most likely fellow to have run away. Leaving the nurse and boys in great disorder, I gave notice of the truant's absence to the steward, and while at his office, in came two other monitors almost breathless with excitement to tell the same tale, respecting two other boys. Running away is a very uncommon circumstance at Christ's Hospital, and therefore a tremendous turmoil this affair created. As a matter of course, the remarks usual on such occasions were not forgotten,—such as, "I am not at all surprised," by the nurse, who disliked our absentee very much, and in truth with good reason. "Well, who would have thought it?" the servant remarked. I believe she was in the secret, and most likely assisted in the preliminaries. As boys a little infected with the romance and poetry of Sherwood forest,* although we were astonished by the daring displayed, nevertheless we considered the matter rather in the light of a glorious freak than otherwise. We had, however, sufficient discrimination to reserve our judgments, lest it should be considered that we were cognisant of the affair.

Some few days elapsed, during which every inquiry was made, and all search instituted. At last the runaways were brought back, and a miserable appearance they presented—a compound of half blue-coat boy and half Robinson Crusoe. We listened with intense interest to our boy's account of the adventure, and I believe it was told without any exaggeration. He related that all three of them had arranged the runaway

* Dr. Mackay in his "Extraordinary Popular Delusions" very properly devotes a chapter to deprecate the impropriety of lauding the exploits of "Great Thieves." See page 248, vol. ii.

business some months previously, and that their intention was to go to sea. Having arrived at this determination, they made a joint-stock bank of all their *weekly allowances* and *tips*, besides selling playthings, books, and, in fact, everything else which was not likely to cause suspicion. When their plans were matured, they agreed to decamp on a leave-day, thus at least gaining twenty-four hours in case of immediate pursuit. Having for some days prior to their departure collected together a stock of provisions, which were crammed into their coat pockets, and being besides plentifully supplied with needles, thread, scissors, buttons, &c., they patiently awaited the appointed day. The fact of our boy collecting together sewing materials did not surprise us, for it is a common circumstance for the boys to have needles and thread, as it was often necessary to cobble up our garments rather than run the risk of being scolded by nurse or servant for any little accident that might happen when engaged in boisterous games. Our runaway was rather clever at stitching up rents, and frequently gained a few pence by his dexterity. All being ready, they met at the gates and decamped together. "The world was all before them where to choose," but they selected the road to Chatham. Their ultimate object was to be engaged on some outward-bound vessel.

Hastening along Cheapside, our runaways soon reached London Bridge, but here they made a pause, as most boys do, to look at the shipping. Upon a fine morning, the scene from London Bridge, on looking down the river, is a very stirring one. Steamers alongside puffing away in eagerness to start; passengers with luggage hastening on deck; porters and news-men running to and fro; smaller steamers coming and going; and in the distance, such a forest of masts, that it appears almost impossible for any vessel to steer clear of a concussion. Our truants gazed upon all this for some little time. Perhaps they ruminated upon the chance of taking water at the Tower, and speculated as to the colour and shape of the pennant that



would wave over their heads. Bethinking themselves that no time should be lost, they commenced their onward movement. Shooter's Hill is the place selected for their first bivouac. Here, our knight-errants, having found a very secluded spot, disencumbered their pockets of some cold meat and potatoes, and made a hearty dinner; and now commenced a consultation as to future operations. But they were disturbed:—

“A shepherd's boy (he seeks no better name)
Led forth his flocks along the silver Thames.”

We doubt whether the rustic was not quite as much dismayed as our truants. In order to conciliate the young countryman, he was invited to partake of some dinner, and although he had eaten of one meal under that name, it seems he did not object to another. The intruder having left, our young desperadoes set to work to metamorphose themselves, but not according to any thing they had ever read about in Ovid. Now, then, to un-blue-coat-boy themselves. For this purpose the sewing materials were produced. Taking off their coats, our heroes turned them into sailors' jackets,—very easily done by cutting off the long skirts; then they removed the hospital buttons of lead, and replaced them by others of brass,—minus the likeness of King Edward. The yellow stockings could not, of course, be tolerated, so they were replaced by some nearly-worn-out green worsted ones. The girdle played its part very usefully, serving as a strap for the luggage, which was carried knapsack-fashion. By an oversight, they had quite forgotten to provide caps: this was a very awkward dilemma. Thus equipped, our would-be sailors, having destroyed every vestige of their encampment, and carefully distributed any piece of cloth that might betray them, marched forward with much freedom. Trudging on from Shooter's Hill, the truants frequently turned to take a peep of the London spires, which they expected to be leaving for many a long year, and very probably began to frame some of the yarns which they would spin to the credulous friends on their return from distant lands.

It was quite an event at the Blue Coat School when any sea boy returned after his first voyage, with his wonderful tales. A boy arrived late one evening, just to see his nurse and chums. He had been at sea two years, and was leaving England again on the morrow of his visit. This young gentleman, according to his own account, had passed through some "hair-breadth 'scapes."

One tale he told us very gravely, the particular point of which was, that for three days and nights he was buried in the sands of the great desert to protect himself from the hungry lions. How he lived during the time did not transpire, nor, as boys, did we trouble to inquire. Verily he painted the picture, and we gazed at it.

But to return to the young trampers, who began to feel tired and nervous, as well they might, for it was growing dark. With the approach of night, their thoughts very naturally turned upon the subject of a lodging. The imagination is considerably heightened by darkness. External objects ceasing to engage attention, the mind is haunted by reflections upon the past, or plans for the future. Plodding on in silence, the three wayfarers were at last delighted to behold in the distance something like the glimmering of a light. Pressing forward with a greater degree of alacrity, they arrived under the porch of an old-fashioned country inn, near Gravesend. Somewhat diffident of their disguise being complete, they raised the latch of the door and walked in. Turning at once into the tap-room our heroes seated themselves at a table, right glad to rest their weary limbs. One essayed the sailor, and called for some beer, but his voice and manner were but a sorry imitation of the British tar. The company present eyed our would-be-thought sailors most unmercifully, and made them exceedingly nervous. After a little deliberation, it was thought advisable once more to face the darkness, and to trudge on to the next inn. Suffering a little from the fear of not finding a bed for the night, the young scapegraces did not trip along very gaily, although the beer, to

which they were unaccustomed, might have been expected to raise their drooping spirits. At this moment, if they had expressed themselves honestly, would they not have preferred their comfortable bed in their own wards to this nocturnal wandering? Pressing onward, impelled by fear, another friendly beacon appeared, to which they hurried.

By the feeble rays of a candle they read on the wall, "good accommodation for travellers." The house appeared to be a lodging-house, and this was exactly the kind of place they wanted. Before the door had been fairly opened, and in breathless anxiety as to the result of their inquiry, they demanded of the woman who appeared in the passage, if they could have beds for the night, or even one large bed. Now, in all probability, had the tenants waited until they had been ushered into a lighted room, their courage would not have stood the test so well. The woman stated that she had but one spare bed. Without troubling the landlady for anything more than a light, our adventurers stumbled up stairs to bed. Exhausted, they slept profoundly: this, however, is rarely the case when one is over-fatigued. But, now, it is morning, and with it comes reflection. A bad deed requires all our courage, and it was some time before the young gentlemen felt sufficiently at ease to crawl down stairs to breakfast. In the general room, which was set apart for meals, they found themselves at last, seated at the table with a motley group. Regarding each other with something akin to suspicion, as travellers mostly do, the meal was eaten in silence. With shame depicted in their countenances, and embarrassment easily discernible in every movement, our truants were making arrangements to leave.

At this particular moment an old tar sadly bothered them. Leaning on his crutch, and shuffling up to the fireplace, he begged pardon, but would be glad "to hear any of them spin a yarn." He was desirous to learn the name of their ship; and why they were so plaguy downhearted when they were ashore.

Stammering out some sort of answer, our heroes did not waste much time with the invalid sailor; but quickly called for the hostess, and paid the reckoning, and dearly too, considering the accommodation. Onward was the word, and Chatham their destination. How very provoking it seemed, but every passer-by stopped to look at the masqueraders. To escape observation, they sometimes took the fields, and at other times the lanes, where they did not very much swerve from the high-road. Nothing particular occurred until their arrival at Chatham. Here, in spite of having purchased sailors' hats, they became "the observed of all observers," and consequently extremely uneasy. The streets had all the appearance of London, and for them there was by far too much bustle in the streets. Somewhat fatigued, they walked into one of those queer-looking public-houses with which every street in Chatham teems, and found themselves in a large room full of sailors. Their first inquiry was respecting an outward-bound vessel. "Call the landlord," said a very uncouth and dismal-looking son of Neptune. The host made his appearance, and with him came a very disagreeable interrogatory, at least our trampers thought so. "Mine host" did not, however, say anything that would lead our heroes to consider that he had any suspicion of their true character. As usual at these places, there were plenty of scamping hangers-on, or agents, as they call themselves, who for a slight consideration put a bandage over their eyes, and then lend themselves to any disreputable proceeding. Our narrator, of No. 9 Ward, continued—"We had actually agreed for a certain sum with one of the most respectable looking of these gentlemen, to find us a vessel." Following close at the heels of the man who they considered was leading them on to freedom, they entered a small street gradually descending to the Medway. With the very water in view, and a vessel within a few hundred yards, perhaps, indeed, the one upon which they were to embark, an incident happens that in a moment upsets all

their schemes. An old gentleman somewhat officiously intercepted our heroes, and, with a searching look, which said plainly enough "I know you," commenced a series of uncomfortable questions, which ended in the sudden disappearance of their guide, and our young gentlemen's detention. The truants were quickly put into safe keeping, and sent back again to school.

After great fatigue and excitement, the wearied system sinks into a mysterious kind of nervous drowsiness. Thus was it with our heroes during their transit to London. The worst evil which they considered could have happened had actually occurred. They had counted the cost, and were now fully prepared for whatever might take place.

Having arrived at Christ's Hospital, the boys were at once given into the custody of the steward, for a kind of primary examination. This ended, they were conducted, by the beadle, to their respective wards for a change of clothing.

When our runaway entered the ward, it was the signal for a burst of laughter, which, however, we monitors quickly suppressed. Only imagine the hero of Shooter's Hill in a coat, or rather jacket, of no "formal cut," and the remainder of his dress sadly changed for the worse.

All this was great fun for us, as spectators; but the poor actor suffered apparently much more from our derision than the after-punishment which he endured. Judgment sometimes tarries; in this case it was swift. The steward, as is customary when boys decamp, consulted with the committee governors, and they passed sentence upon the three black sheep. It was severe, but not more so than was necessary. They were sentenced to be publicly flogged, and expelled. For some time this affair was an important feature of conversation and speculation with the boys generally.

Ten years after these events, being in London, I entered a barber's shop for the purpose of making a purchase, when the proprietor accosted me with, "I know you, sir. You were my

monitor at Christ's Hospital." It was only after the detail of several circumstances that I could discover in the tradesman before me the runaway. "That was indeed a foolish affair," said he; "I have ever regretted it." In a few words he narrated his history, which may be thus briefly told:—Upon his expulsion from the school, being without friends—for he was placed at Christ's Hospital by a parochial presentation—he wandered about the streets, offering his services as an errand-boy at the various warehouses in the city. Failing, however, in this, he was at his wits' end, when fortunately he chanced to inquire of a barber, who was standing at his door, whether he could employ him. This was a most fortunate rencontre for the poor fellow, as the shopman took some trouble to teach him the business. By dint of frugality he contrived to put aside a portion of his small earnings, and so saved sufficient capital to open a very respectable little shop. Years have since rolled on, and to this day I still see his name over the door; so it may be presumed that if industry and perseverance were wanting in the boy, they are happily found in the man.

During the summer season our half-holidays were most agreeably spent in the healthful exercise of swimming. Peerless Pool,* so well known to blue-coat boys, was the bath we patronised.

Sea-bathing is exceedingly salubrious and very delightful, provided you are old enough to enjoy it; but I have little faith in the belief that children think it sport to be dipped into the briny waves.

Who has not often been much amused at the grimaces and struggling of the little urchins, as the guides and nurses administer the morning bath? But stop, I have to discuss the merits of the ocean bath, and not the ocean itself.

* The origin of Peerless Pool appears to have been a spring which, overflowing its banks, produced a large and deep accumulation of water. Many lives were lost by incautious bathers, and thus the pond was designated "perilous." This word soon became corrupted into "peerless." It is stated that Kemp, who held the pond in 1743, first converted it into a safe bath, under the name of "Peerless Pool."

From June to August, arrangements are made by the governors with the proprietors of Peerless Pool, in Bath Street, City Road, for bathing, on Thursday and Saturday afternoons. On these days the monitors of each ward make a selection of ten boys, whose names are handed to the steward, as being desirous of visiting Peerless Pool. At three o'clock the bathers assemble in number about 200, and form themselves into a line. The procession, headed by two beadle, moves on, impatient for the cooling stream:—

“Cheer'd by the milder beam, the sprightly youth
Speeds to the well-known pool, whose crystal depth
A sandy bottom shows.”

It is a great point with the boys who shall be the first to plunge into the bath, and, consequently, it can be easily imagined what plans are resorted to for expedition in undressing. Thus, long before the boys arrive in Bath Street, all strings, buckles, and ties of every kind have, by some unseen means, become unloosed, and in a few moments after the gates are passed, commences a scene of splashing and dashing, which is very amusing. .

Peerless Pool is by far the largest bath in London, and, moreover, it has the advantage of being an open-air bath. The water is supplied from the New River, and is continually flowing in and out. It has been established for more than a century. Around the bath is a gravel walk and shrubbery. Here and there are boxes for dressing, and one larger than the rest—a kind of omnibus box, with a large mirror, which most temptingly reflects the cooling stream. Viewed from the entrance, the appearance of the looking-glass leads one, at first sight, to imagine an interminable waste of waters. In front of the boxes the deepest water is to be found, which is a depth of about five feet some few inches. At this end of the bath, called the Half-circle, from the shape, the depth is only three feet four inches. This part also was stigmatised as the

Mud's Corner. Now the word mud is applied to a boy that is timid of the water, and who, therefore, seeks the shallowest spot to escape being ducked. Each ward has its own peculiar and arranged *locus standi*, which by no means must be trespassed upon. This, of course, only refers to the outside—when you are in the bath you may paddle or swim wherever you please. As a rule, no boy is permitted to walk ignobly down the steps, but is urged to plunge gloriously into the liquid stream. This proceeding, however, is rather a nervous business for the first time, and before you know anything of swimming. It is all very well for Thomson to say—

“This is the purest exercise of health,
The kind refresher of the summer heats;”

but when you are not allowed to enter the water as you please, somewhat of the romance of bathing becomes too much of a reality. Every boy who has been to Peerless Pool has seen scores of little urchins, valiant enough in their own play-ground, quite alarmed at the sight of the water, as they stood shivering and hesitating on the brink. This fear is not lessened by the knowledge that you are about to jump into deep water. Of course there are boys ready to save you, but then they consider it their privilege to duck you before carrying your scrambling corpus to the steps. Being placed on the steps, you hasten round to the half-circle as quickly as possible, and think yourself lucky if you do not fall in with some other big boy who gives you a lesson in diving, much against your will.

Blue-coat boys mostly become good swimmers, and frequently some very artistic manœuvres may be witnessed on Thursday or Saturday afternoons, during the bathing season. All kinds of feats are practised—plain and ornamental swimming, diving, turning Somersets and Devonshires,* leap-frog, and follow-my-leader. Sometimes matches were made, but

* To accomplish a Devonshire you throw yourself over backwards instead of forwards, as in the “Somerset.”

these were generally decided at our private visits to the bath. These visits occurred on half-day leaves, and then we spent the whole afternoon in the agreeable pastime of swimming and cutting capers in the water. On these occasions a party of us would club together, and so very comfortably pass the afternoon. It was no uncommon thing for us to be bathing for hours; and how it happened that no unpleasant effects arose from this apparently imprudent proceeding is a mystery.

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGER walking through the cloisters of Christ's Hospital, as they now appear in their modernised state, could not easily detect any portion of the Old Grey Friars Monastery. Within the last thirty years great changes have taken place, and but few vestiges of the old foundation remain. Stow, the antiquarian, speaking of Grey Friars, says that "in the year 1552 began the repairing of the Grey Friars' House for the poor fatherless children; and in the month of November the children were taken into the same, to the number of almost four hundred. On Christmas day, in the afternoon, while the Lord Mayor and Aldermen rode to Paules, the children of Christ's Hospital stood from Saint Lawrence Lane-end in Cheape, towards Paules, all in one livery of russet cotton, three hundred and forty in number; and in Easter next they were in blue, at the Spittle, and so have continued ever since."

The most important modern building on the foundation is undoubtedly the Great Hall, wherein the boys take their meals. The foundation stone of this handsome structure was laid by the Duke of York, on the 28th of April, 1825, and

it was the intention of this royal personage to preside at the opening, had not death frustrated the laudable desire. On the 29th of May, 1829, the new hall was opened in great state by Prince Leopold, now King of the Belgians. On this interesting occasion the boys were regaled with roast beef and plum-pudding, and, moreover, to each boy was given a glass of wine. The officers and nurses also received a substantial present, so that the sounds of mirth and jollity echoed along the old monastic arches. It was a joyous day to all who participated in the imposing ceremony.

To those who have not yet seen the interior of the new dining-hall, it may be interesting to enter into some details respecting it. At one end of the hall is a very large and fine-toned organ, which was the gift of George IV. The picture representing Edward VI. granting the Charter of incorporation occupies the upper end of the hall, opposite to the organ. This picture, which is on a large scale, is attributed, by many, to Holbein, but there does not appear to be any very safe authority that he was the painter. Extending the greater part of the length of the hall is a large painting by Verrio, representing James II. seated on his throne, surrounded by his courtiers, receiving the boys of the mathematical school, at their annual presentation. The boys are in the act of extending, for the Monarch's inspection, their charts and drawings. This custom is continued by Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen-Victoria. Verrio presented this large painting to the hospital. Near this enormous painting by Verrio, is a full-length portrait of Charles II., by the same painter. There is also a full-length portrait of the founder of Child's banking-house, Sir Francis Child, who died in 1713.

There is a painfully interesting picture near the stranger's gallery, of an accident that befel Brook Watson, when a boy. He was bathing from a boat, and, whilst enjoying the refreshing pastime of swimming, was attacked by a shark. The artist,

J. S. Copley, R.A., the father of Lord Lyndhurst, has depicted the moment when the sailors are rescuing him from the voracious monster. By this sad accident Brook Watson lost his leg.

There are two paintings which will always be regarded with pleasure ; these are full-length portraits, by F. Grant, A.R.A., of the Queen and Prince Albert, who have taken a great interest in Christ's Hospital, and we feel a pleasure in recording it.

Besides the paintings which we have specially mentioned, there are several other portraits. In a few years the general effect of the interior of the hall will be considerably increased by the painted windows, which are added from time to time. The spaces in the windows are quickly filling up with the coats of arms of the different companies and benefactors, and when completed the soft light reflected through the coloured glass will produce a most beautiful effect. On the elaborately-carved oak panels the coats of arms of the presidents and treasurers are arranged in chronological order. Behind the steward's chair, which is on a raised platform, is a stone inserted in the wall. From this circumstance arises the saying of the monitor, when complaining of a boy's misconduct, "Go to the stone, you sir." In the capacity of monitor you "send the boy to the stone," or, in other words, to stand opposite to the steward's table during the dinner hour, and when the meal is finished you walk to the steward and lodge your complaint against the unhappy wight, who is punished accordingly.

In the counting-house may be seen some very good paintings ; amongst others, one of the royal founders, Edward VI.: this is generally considered to be by Holbein, and most probably it is.

We will now make slight mention of some of the celebrated blues.

One of the earliest blues of eminence was Edmund Campian, who was born in London in 1540. In 1558 he was elected scholar of St. John's College, Oxford, by the founder Thomas White.

Dr. Campian became a Jesuit, and upon his return from the Continent was found guilty of high treason. With some other Romish priests he was executed at Tyburn in 1581.

The antiquary William Camden, born May 2, 1551, is said to have been educated in Christ's Hospital, although some little doubt is entertained respecting it. Camden's great work was the "Britannia," published in 1586, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth's Treasurer, Lord Burleigh. He was only 35 years of age when he completed this important work.

When the Gunpowder-plot was discovered, the King selected Camden to translate into Latin the full account of the conspiracy, and all the evidence taken at the trial of Guy Fawkes and his associates. This book very soon found a place in the Index Librorum Prohibitorum of the Inquisition. In 1615 appeared the first part of his history of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, under the title of "Annales Rerum Anglicarum et Hibernicarum regnante Elizabethâ ad Ann. Salutis 1589, Lond."

Camden was accused of partial statements respecting the Queen of Scots, and his detail of Irish affairs. The animadversions upon his history made him decline publishing the second part during his lifetime. He finished the second part in 1617; and entrusted a copy of it to his friend Mr. Dupuy, with the understanding that it was not to be printed until after his death, which took place in 1623, in the seventy-third year of his age. In 1625 appeared the first edition in 8vo. at Leyden.

In 1590, we find that David Baker entered Pembroke College, Oxford: he was then fifteen years of age. Leaving college, he studied the law, but having narrowly escaped drowning, he determined to devote his after-life to religion, and joined a small congregation of Benedictine Monks. His death took place in Gray's Inn Lane, August 1641, and he was buried in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn.

The writings of this learned man consisted principally of religious treatises.

In Wood's "Athena Oxoniensis," mention is made of John Vicars, who was born in London in 1582, and was enrolled as member of Queen's College, Oxford. After leaving college, John Vicars accepted the appointment of under-master at Christ's Hospital, and remained upon the foundation until death removed him from his sphere of usefulness, in August, 1652. He was buried in Christ Church, Newgate Street.

The justly-celebrated, though pedantic, Professor of Greek at Cambridge, Joshua Barnes, was born in January, 1654. Before he went to the University he published "Sacred Poems" in five books. He very early displayed great knowledge of the Greek language. He was the author of numerous works, chiefly classical.

Bentley, in speaking of Barnes' extraordinary knowledge of the Greek language, compared it to the colloquial readiness of a vulgar mechanic, rather than to the learning of a scholar. He died August 3, 1712, and was buried at Hemingford. On his tombstone is recorded a curious fact, that he "read a small English Bible 121 times at his leisure."

We have next to notice an eminent mathematician and physician, James Irwin, who was born in 1684. Leaving Christ's Hospital he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he was Fellow in 1711. In 1712 he edited "Varenius' Geography." For many years Dr. Irwin was an active member and Secretary of the Royal Society. He died in 1750. At the time of his death he was President of the College of Physicians.

The subject of our next memoir is Jeremiah Markland, one of the most erudite and tasteful critics of his day. He was born in October, 1693. In 1704 we find him a member of St. Peter's College, Cambridge. This really splendid scholar edited several of the classics. A modern writer, speaking of Mr. Markland, says, that "for modesty, candour, literary honesty, and courteousness to other scholars, he has been considered as the model which ought to be proposed for the imitation of every critic."

Death put an end to his severe sufferings from gout in July, 1776, in the eighty-third year of his age.

In 1778 Paul Wright took the degree of Doctor of Divinity, at Cambridge. He was the author and editor of numerous publications. He died at Oakley, in 1785.

Thomas Pentycross, afterwards Rector of St. Mary's, Wallingford, Berks, was born in 1748. Whilst at school he appears to have been excessively fond of theatrical readings; indeed so much so, that he prevailed upon some of his playmates to assist him in getting up a dramatic performance. Being a monitor, he exercised a considerable degree of influence over the boys committed to his charge. The performances, as arranged by him, took place at midnight; the little boys, of course, being compelled to form an unwilling audience. When he was raised to the dignity of Grecian, the player became merged into the preacher, and in the latter character he was much more zealous to obtain hearers of his sermons than he had previously been in seeking applause as an actor.

Mr. Pentycross was an enthusiast in everything which from time to time engaged his attention. He died in the sixtieth year of his age, in February, 1808.

George Dyer, a decidedly popular writer and agreeable poet, was born in 1775. Leaving the school, he proceeded to Emanuel College, Cambridge. In a short time, however, he left the College and joined the Dissenters. Curiously enough, he soon abandoned the Dissenters and became a political writer. Mr. Dyer's first engagement in London was as reporter of parliamentary debates. To his able pen we are indebted for many excellent works.

Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, D.D., Lord Bishop of Calcutta, entered Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1792. Dr. Middleton was selected to preside over the ecclesiastical establishment in British India in 1814.

We have now to mention the name of Samuel T. Coleridge,

one of the greatest men of his time. He was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devon, in 1773. And yet a perusal of the writings of Coleridge is nearly always accompanied with a species of dissatisfaction. As a boy at school his ideas were always bewildering, and it is not surprising that as a man the same spirit should more or less pervade his compositions. In 1794 Mr. Coleridge published a volume of "Juvenile Poems." The critics dealt lightly with this first essay at the shrine of the Muses, and prophesied better works to come,—although they censured the obscurity of his language. Some little time after the publication of this volume of poems, Mr. Coleridge, and his friends Southey and Lovell, formed a scheme of emigration upon purely Spencean principles. The settlers were to hold all property in common, and each man by turns was to legislate for the rest. It was proposed to settle on the banks of the Susquehanna. Curiously enough, these adventurers were thrown into the society of three sisters, by name Fricker; the mighty undertaking of colonisation was therefore overturned. "Amor non patitur moras" (love brooks no delays), and Mr. Coleridge, with his bride, quietly settled at Nether Stowey, near Bridgewater. In 1798 Mr. Coleridge visited Germany, where he made acquaintance with the celebrated authors, Blumenbach and Klopstock. The latter complained of the execrable translation into English of his "Messiah," and implored Mr. Coleridge to undertake to translate some of the principal passages. Returning to England, Mr. Coleridge was engaged on the *Morning Post* newspaper, which he managed during the Addington Administration. At this time he translated from the German of Schiller several popular dramas. He died in 1834.

Of all the blues who have been distinguished by learning or position, perhaps no one has obtained so much celebrity as Charles Lamb. From one of his essays we learn his birth-place. "Cheerful Crown Office Row (Temple), place of my kindly engender." This voluminous writer was born in 1775. At the

age of twenty-three years he published, in conjunction with Charles Lloyd, a volume entitled "Blank Verses," and in the same year, "A Tale of Rosamund Grey and Old Blind Margaret." In 1802, was published his tragedy of "John Woodville." Mr. Coleridge, in his own peculiar manner of expressing himself, criticised this performance of his friend, as "being a little too over-antique in the style."

Mr. Lamb next produced his delightful "Tales from Shakspeare," in two volumes; and a year afterwards, in 1808, appeared "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets." These productions of his ready pen were quickly followed by "Essays of Elia" and others. Charles Lamb, James Mill, well known by his work on British India, and Hoole, the translator of Tasso, were all three engaged as clerks in the East India House. "My printed works," said Lamb, "were my recreations; my true works may be found on the shelves in Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios."

Charles Lamb died in the same year (1834) as his friend Coleridge.

Thomas Skinner Surr, author of "Christ's Hospital," a poem published in 1797, was engaged for many years at the Bank of England, and employed his leisure hours in writing several novels, as well as other works of a miscellaneous character. In 1801 he published, "Refutation of Certain Misrepresentations relative to the Nature and Influence of Bank Notes, and of the Stoppage of Specie at the Bank of England, upon the Price of Provisions."

Charles Valentine Le Grice, upon quitting the school, was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1794 appeared his first work, "The Tineum, containing Estianomy, or the Art of Stirring a Fire;" this was quickly followed by the "Icead," a mock heroic, in imitation of Horace. In 1796 was published, "Analysis of Dr. Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy;" and in quick succession followed "Thoughts on

the Harvest," "Daphnis and Chloe," a pastoral novel, &c. &c. Two clever and somewhat ingenious performances, entitled "A General Theorem for a Trinity Declamation," and "Hints to Freshmen," are ascribed to Mr. Le Grice.

James White, well known as the author of "Original Letters, &c. of Sir John Falstaff and his Friends," was a gentleman of considerable talent and much wit. This work was very favourably received by the public.

Very shortly after the appearance of these letters on Falstaff, James White died, after a very short illness, in March, 1820.

The Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne, B.D., Rector of St. Edmund the King, Lombard Street, and a Prebendary of St. Paul's. This gentleman left Christ's Hospital as a "Deputy Grecian." He is known wherever the English language is read as author of the "Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures," which for the last thirty-five years, has been a text-book in all our colleges and universities. A list of Mr. Horne's other publications will be found in Darling's "Cyclopædia Bibliographiæ."

The eminent engraver and portrait painter, Henry Meyer, was educated at Christ's Hospital. He evinced very early a predisposition for drawing, and for the sake of improvement was placed in the mathematical school. At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to a chalk engraver, but after serving many years to this branch of the profession, he found out by sad experience, that it was not likely to prove of sufficient advantage to him either as an artist or in obtaining a livelihood. Under these circumstances, he entered into another engagement with a celebrated mezzo-tinto engraver.

In this second step fortune did not seem to favour him, and it required all the native energy of his character to bear up under these accumulated disappointments.

Mr. Meyer now turned his attention not only to engraving, but also to the publishing of his own works. From this time

the tide in his affairs took a favourable change. He was most successful with the numerous portraits that appeared under his direction. He engraved the magnificent edition of the "British Gallery of Portraits," published by Cadell and Davies; as also the portrait of Dr. Vincent, which formed the frontispiece to Ackermann's "History of Westminster Abbey."

The celebrated Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, born in 1635, upon leaving Christ's Hospital became rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn. He lived for many years in Park Street, Westminster. He possessed a splendid library of well-selected works. We find that, in 1699, Dr. Bentley wrote to his friend Evelyn, begging him to meet Sir Christopher Wren, Sir Robert Southwell, and some other associates, to dine at Pontack's (at that time, a celebrated French eating-house in Abchurch Lane), to arrange for the purchase of Bishop Stillingfleet's library, on account of the Royal Society.

In Swift's "Journal to Stella," we find mention made of Pontack's in the following terms:—"16th August, 1711.—I was this day in the City, and dined at Pontack's. Pontack told us, although his wine was so good, he sold it cheaper than others. He took but seven shillings a flask. Are not these pretty rates?"

In Pepys' "Diary" occurs the following:—"January 16, 1666-7.—Sir R. Ford tells me how the famous Stillingfleete was a blue-coat boy." The good bishop died in 1697.

Samuel Richardson, the author of "Clarissa Harlowe" and many other novels, was a blue. He was born in 1689. Richardson was a printer as well as an author. His office was situated in Salisbury Square, Fleet Street. It was formerly called Salisbury Court. In this court Richardson wrote his "Pamela." Goldsmith, for some time, attended at Richardson's printing-office, in this neighbourhood, as his press-corrector. There are excellent portraits of Richardson and his wife in Stationers' Hall. Our novelist was master of the company in

1754. His death took place in 1761. He was buried in St. Bride's, Fleet Street.

A few years since, Richardson's master-piece, "Clarissa Harlowe," was translated into French, and dramatised. In Paris it was played with the greatest success. Few English novels have enjoyed so much reputation in France as those of Richardson.

Thomas Mitchell, the unequalled translator of the comedies of Aristophanes, was perhaps one of the best classics of his day. Having completed his studies as Grecian, he entered Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where he took his degree. The first volume of his translation of Aristophanes was published in 1819.

Thomas Barnes, editor and co-proprietor of the "Times," after leaving Christ's Hospital, proceeded to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. He was the author of a volume entitled "Parliamentary Portraits."

On the 19th of October, 1784, was born James Henry Leigh Hunt, one of the most clever and agreeable of our modern writers. He was related, on his mother's side, to the late celebrated painter, Benjamin West. His parents were both Americans.

At the early age of 17, Mr. Hunt published his little work in 12mo—"Juvenilia, or Poems written between the Ages of Twelve and Sixteen." In 1808 appeared "Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres." The next year, he commenced the editorship of the *Examiner*. Prose and poetical works followed each other in rapid succession—indeed, Mr. Hunt has been, and still is, a most indefatigable writer. In the year 1819 appeared the first number of the "Indicator," which, after eighteen months' able management, was discontinued, owing to the indisposition of the editor.

In this slight sketch of eminent blues, I am compelled to omit many names; but the following must be mentioned:—

The Rev. James Boyer was the head classical master when

Coleridge was in the school. Speaking of him, he says, “He early moulded my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero—of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil—and, again, of Virgil to Ovid.”

The Rev. Arthur William Trollope, D.D. (father of the present Rev. William Trollope, author of a very clever and elaborate work on Christ’s Hospital), was for many years head classical master—a post that he filled until his death, with great credit to himself, and much advantage to his pupils. He was succeeded by Dr. Greenwood, who was head-master in 1827.

Sir Edward Thornton, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Brazils, was at the same college as William Pitt. The friendship which there commenced was the means of procuring the interest of the great minister for the above-mentioned situation in the Government service.

Robert Precious and George Godwin, Esqrs., being successful and rich merchants, became munificent benefactors to the schools. The former was an active committee-governor for years. Mr. Precious died in 1810, in the 74th year of his age.

The Rev. Dr. George Townsend, a Canon Residentiary of Durham. He is author of several valuable biblical and theological works. He left the school as a “Deputy Grecian,” and afterwards studied at Cambridge.

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Gilly, also a Canon Residentiary of Durham, and Vicar of Norham. He is author of some very interesting works on the subject of the Waldenses.

The Rev. James Scholefield, for many years a writer to the “Quarterly Review.” He was for twenty-eight years the assiduous and indefatigable Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Cambridge. Besides editing the tragedies of *Æschylus* and Porson’s *Euripides*, and of Dobree’s *Adversaria*, Professor Scholefield was author of several Sermons on various public occasions, and of a truly valuable volume of “Hints for an improved Translation of the New Testament.”

Henry Woodthorpe, Esq., appointed town-clerk to the city of London in 1801.

George Norton, Esq., one of the city common pleaders.

The Rev. Thomas Dale, a Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, one of the most useful ministers in the Church of England at the present day, is justly celebrated for his eloquence and fervour in the pulpit, and for his consistent conduct in private life. He left the school as a "Deputy Grecian," and for a short time was engaged in commerce. He subsequently proceeded to Cambridge, where he distinguished himself. Besides a volume of really beautiful Poems, he is author of several volumes of Sermons, and also some single Sermons.

CHAPTER X.

THE important season of Easter is held in great veneration at Christ's Hospital, and is anticipated with much pleasure by the boys; and this delightful portion of the year must be hailed with gratitude by all, in many respects. The winter, with its cold and dreariness, is fast declining before the vernal sun, and all Nature beams with smiles. New hopes are infused into each breast, and we seem to regain once more that redundancy of spirits so characteristic of beautiful spring. But who has written of spring like Thomson? Well might Lord Lyttleton say, that Thomson's works "contained no line which dying, he could wish to blot." How pleasantly the Poet of the Seasons has depicted spring:—

"At last from Aries rolls the bounteous Sun,
And the bright Bull receives him.—Then no more
Th' expansive atmosphere is cramp'd with cold;
But, full of life and vivifying soul,
Lifts the light clouds subline, and spreads them thin,
Fleecy and white, o'er all surrounding heav'n."

At this time we had a fortnight's holidays, commencing early in Passion, or, as we call it, clothing week. The first portion of the week was occupied in attendance at the Wardrobe, to try on and receive our new clothes. The metal buttons reflected our ruddy cheeks like mirrors, and our girdles were blooming red; but a very little exposure to the atmosphere deadened the brilliancy of both. Any one not accustomed to this scene would be at a loss to understand why the smaller articles of dress, which the monitors distributed, were so searchingly examined. It is considered good taste to select a well-stamped girdle, and the smallest of the caps. In the case of the latter, the little boys, of course, obtained the largest caps, theirs being nothing more than Hobson's choice.

The ten leading boys of each ward wear a broader girdle as a mark of distinction. Many of the wearers of this badge of honour secure for themselves a silver buckle, and occasionally may be seen one set with brilliants. In our ward was left, as an heir-loom to the head monitor, *à perpétuité*, a very handsome silver buckle.

Good Friday is observed with all the solemnity of the Sabbath. The play-ground, however, may be considered a species of Long-Champs in miniature. Each boy *spadges* about with his associates in new clothes; and to admire or criticise it must be confessed, is most certainly a portion of the day's occupation. A benefactor, with much generosity and some eccentricity, has established a curious ceremony on this day. It is, that all boys who have attained the age of 13 years shall proceed to All Hallows' Church, Lombard Street, to hear a sermon, after which each boy is presented with a bag of plums and a penny. This odd business was stigmatised as "chanting for a penny and singing for a plum." To the best of my recollection, the whole proceeding was not very inspiriting. The church was cold, and nearly empty, the sermon long, and so undertoned that we heard little of it. Two respectable parishioners stood at the doors to distribute the alms, in the shape of pennies and plums, and beyond

them, under the porch, was assembled a crowd of old men and women, ready and willing to receive the coppers; nor were they disappointed, for it was not deemed good taste to carry home the money. On Easter Sunday, the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs attend at Christ's Church, and on the Monday a grand ceremony takes place—that is to say, we thought it so, as boys. We then proceeded, accompanied by the masters, steward, and beadle, to the Royal Exchange, waiting there until we were summoned to the Mansion House. All being ready, the Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress, Sheriffs, Aldermen, and other City functionaries, joined the procession to Christ's Church, where a sermon is preached by one or other of the bishops, and an appropriate anthem is sung by the boys. To the breast of each boy is attached a label, on which are inscribed the words "He is risen." The service being concluded, his lordship and attendants return to the Mansion-House, to dinner,—the festivities of the day being closed by music and dancing.

On Easter Tuesday we once more visited the Mansion-House, but this time the matron and nurses, not the masters, were our companions. Arriving at the Lord Mayor's residence, you are jostled on by the attendants to the Venetian parlour, where the Lord Mayor is seated at a table, surrounded by his friends. Within reach of the donor is a large heap of new shillings, one of which is given to each boy as he passes the table. The gratuity was formerly only sixpence. The history of some of these shillings is rather curious. Many boys of a prudent disposition save all the shillings which they receive at Easter, and regard them with a kind of sacred superstition. Others, not being able to trust their own good intentions to preserve the coin as relics, very wisely remove the temptation of circulating the same by sending the shillings to their friends. In some instances silver salt-spoons have been manufactured out of the money thus received. Carefully pocketing the new piece of

silver, you are hurried on to a servant in livery, who hands you a bun, and just as you are meditating the delicious morsel, still being urged forward, another attendant presents you with a glass of wine. In a few moments you are in the street again, not knowing exactly in which direction to look for your comrades. The whole affair is such a bustle, that you are, especially the first time, quite bewildered. It is said that some of the boys have occasionally adroitly contrived to obtain two or more buns and a glass of wine to correspond, but they must be indeed ingenious to manage it. After all this fluster, the Lord Mayor and his Court again attend Christ's Church. The sermon on this occasion is preached by his lordship's chaplain. However agreeable this ceremony may be to the boys, there is another of a much more interesting nature, which takes place once a year. I allude to the visit of the mathematical boys to her Majesty, at St. James's Palace, where they present their drawings and charts for inspection.

The following very interesting account of this royal presentation appeared in one of the weekly journals:—

“One of the episodal scenes of her Majesty's drawing-room, on Thursday week, and by no means the least interesting ceremony of the day, was the presentation of certain scholars of Christ's Hospital to the notice of the Sovereign. For this high honour are annually selected forty of the ‘mathematical boys’ of the foundation, who, on the first drawing-room day of the season, are conveyed in coaches to St. James's Palace, and are there presented to her Majesty, when, attended by the president and other officers of the school, they exhibit their charts to the Sovereign, with feelings that can be better imagined than described. They are then presented with the gratuity of eight guineas from the regal purse, which sum is divided among the ten boys who leave the school in the year; and formerly, to this amount, other members of the Royal Family added smaller sums.

“On the illness of George the Third these presentations were discontinued; but the Governors of the Hospital, nevertheless, paid £1 3s., the ordinary amount received by each, to every boy on quitting; and the total exceeds the amount received by about £2 10s.

“The practice of receiving the children was revived by the late King William the Fourth, who, from his predilection for the sea, examined the charts presented by the boys, and bestowed a passing note of commendation wherever he recognised merit.

“Her present Majesty, too, is known to take especial interest in the welfare of this magnificent foundation, and has recently presented to the treasury the sum of £1,000.

“The mathematical school is but a ‘ward’ of Christ's Hospital;

though it is an important integer of 'the noblest institution in the world.' It was the first addition to the foundation after the Great Fire. It originated with Sir Robert Clayton, then Lord Mayor, and who had himself been a considerable benefactor; and at whose suggestion King Charles the Second, on the 19th of August, 1676, granted a second charter, allowing £1,000 a year, for seven years, to establish a mathematical school for forty boys, and an annuity of £370 10s., payable at the Exchequer, for the especial purpose of educating and placing out yearly ten boys in the sea service. But the worthy Lord Mayor liberally followed up the King's munificence, for, in 1675, he rebuilt the south front of the ward, at a cost of £7,000.

"It was again rebuilt in 1832, from the designs of the architect of the Hospital, the late Mr. Shaw: it is comprised in the same edifice with the grammar school, and both make an elegant structure, adorned with statues of Charles the Second and Edward the Sixth.

"Lest this mathematical school should fail for want of boys properly qualified to supply it, one Mr. Stone, a governor, left a legacy to maintain a subordinate mathematical school of twelve boys: this is called 'Stone's School,' and here the younglings are prepared for reception into the King's ward, as the upper school is called.

"Previous to his leaving the latter school, each boy is examined by a board of the Trinity House, having passed which, and received testimonials of his good conduct, he is presented with a watch, as a reward, worth from £9 to £13, in addition to an outfit of clothes, books, mathematical instruments, a Gunter's scale, quadrant, and sea-chest."

The next pageant which we will attempt to describe comes under the denomination of Public suppers. These occasions are greeted with much pleasure by the boys, not because there is anything beyond the usual bill of fare, bread and butter, but at these times the Great Hall is crowded with visitors, and presents a very animated appearance. The public suppers take place every Sunday evening, from March to Easter. The admission is by a governor's, steward's or master's ticket; and the demand for these orders of admission is very great.

At the top of the hall, cross and side seats are arranged for visitors, according to their rank. Sometimes the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs attend, and I have occasionally observed members of the aristocracy and foreigners of distinction.

The usual prayers antecedent to the supper having been read, the boys betake themselves to their frugal meal. On these evenings the butter is moulded into a floral pat, and the candlesticks are decorated. If you are hungry, as boys mostly are, little heed is given to the elegance of the butter pat. It seemed

to me that in the second process the butter lost weight. Whilst the boys are busily engaged in their evening repast, the visitors promenade the spacious hall.

Arranged at some eighteen tables, your eyes rest upon rows of healthy and happy boys, in earnest combat with the eatables before them; and then interspersed between the forms are seen visitors going and coming, some chatting with their blue-coat relatives, and others gazing in silent admiration at the pleasant scene. Many of the visitors have probably been educated in the school, and at the very moment they are engaged in the ceremony, must feel an inward satisfaction that they can now render grateful homage to a foundation in which they have been reared, by adding to its funds. What can be more satisfactory for a blue-coat boy, who has honourably acquired wealth, than becoming a benefactor? There are many ways of doing good, and it is a mistake to suppose that the beggar in rags is most deserving of relief. Without saying that too much is done in the way of charity for the very poorest, is it not evident that too little is proposed and carried out for the benefit of a class who, although equally poor, take pains to hide and, better still, to conquer their poverty? Christ's Hospital deserves the generous support which it commands, because it extends the arm of help to those who can appreciate and really benefit by it. After supper an anthem is sung by the boys, and very admirably they manage it. As a matter of course the singing-master selects and tutors the best voices, some for the choir, and a few as solos. When I formed one of the chorus, the grandson of the celebrated Incledon was *il primo tenore*. Before the anthem commenced, the organist was very careful to supply his leading singers with clarifiers of the voice in the shape of barley-sugar, and oftentimes we stole up into the organ gallery to smuggle, if possible, a portion of the dainty. The anthem being finished, and the poor organist relieved from his anxiety, the Bowing-round commenced. This parade may be called the

important event of the evening. The various wards, headed by the nurses and monitors, form themselves into ranks. The bearers, not of standards, but of the bread-basket, knife-basket, table-cloths, water and beer cans, salt bowls, and the smallest boys carrying the candlesticks, are ingeniously interspersed. When the Lord Mayor is present he presides, otherwise one of the governors takes the chair. The music commences, and the procession moves on, the boys, two and two, bowing before the chair. This Bowing-round occupies nearly an hour, and closes the ceremony. It was very amusing on Saturday evenings to witness the rehearsal of the following night's performance. We then placed a poker on the floor, and marching straight up to it, bowed to any presiding genius, and sometimes indeed to an empty chair.

We have attempted to delineate the leading ceremonies in which the boys are assisted by the governors, masters, and steward; we will now give a few particulars of the great event amongst the boys themselves, which took place at Christmas.

What a host of agreeable reminiscences overwhelm the mind at the bare sound of the word Christmas! What a season it is for enjoyment, not of that nature which centres everything in selfishness, but the desire to distribute blessings amongst our fellow-creatures! If there is any moment during the course of the year in which the morose and restless miser feels the slightest inclination to be generous, it is at Christmas. How little is to be envied the wealth of such a man! Undoubtedly the miser has his own peculiar pleasure, for there must be some satisfaction, however morbid, in the mere hoarding of pelf: he feels an unexplained delight in the possession of what myriads are ever risking body and soul to obtain. Man has been eternally jostled between fame and gold. The miser calmly regards the struggling crowd, and looks on with indifference when thousands are daily ruining others and being ruined. Some there are who seem to labour on from day to day as if

increase of wealth would gain for them an immortality to enjoy it, forgetting how their strength is exhausted in its attainment. Is it wise, is it right to be so grasping?

The yule log on the cheerful fire, and the merry song and dance have charms for me, and I grieve to see from year to year the festivities of Christmas, once so characteristic of Merrie England, falling into disuse. Could anything be more praiseworthy than the excellent custom of entertaining friends and neighbours at this joyous season, not forgetting the poor? In these degenerate days of cautious calculation, some remnants of the good old times remain. There are still some fine old halls where the holly and misseltoe are displayed, and tables on which the baron of beef and the never-to-be-forgotten plum-pudding are invitingly placed, to say nothing of the merry peals of laughter around the flowing bowl.

Christmas-day has two distinctive characteristics at Christ's Hospital, as indeed it should have everywhere; the one of a religious, and the other of a mirthful nature. Both morning and afternoon we attended church, filling up the intervals with religious exercises as on Sundays; but at 5 o'clock the devotional portion of the day ended, and then commenced in right earnest the preparations for the evening festivities, which took place in the wards. On this occasion alone all differences of station were put aside. Nurses, monitors, head-boys, and juniors, all blended for a few hours in one mirth-seeking company.

With a view of giving great *éclat* to our festive scene, each boy exercised his utmost influence with his friends to obtain a *good parcel*, and the application in few instances was in vain, as the appearance of the line of tables proves. Here you observe a smoking hot goose, there an apple-pie; on one side figures a cold turkey and ham, kept in countenance by a pigeon-pie. Once I remember seeing a baked sucking-pig, such a one as Charles Lamb would have eyed with ecstasy.* Plum-puddings,

* See "Essays of Elia."



mince-pies, oranges, nuts, almonds and raisins, figs and grapes, all crowded together in the most admired disorder. Occasionally British wine would make its appearance, although nothing of this nature is allowed. Our plan was to place everything upon the tables, and to invite everybody to be a guest. There were always some poor fellows who could not contribute to the feast, but they were permitted to help themselves as freely as the most liberal subscriber. The appearance of the wards at those times was really cheering, and much taste was displayed. Picture to yourself every nook and corner of the ward decorated with variegated candles and evergreens. The candlesticks were adorned with the most fantastic devices in tinsel and wax. From the roof were suspended flags and banners. At a given signal, the lighting up, as it was termed, commenced, and soon afterwards the work of demolition—the latter with an earnestness that was quite unmistakeable; indeed most of the boys fast all day, in anticipation of the evening grub feast. This general fasting of the boys on Christmas-day contributes much to the benefit of the poor, who daily flock in large numbers to receive the fragments that are brought down from the hall. Nothing is served up a second time at Christ's Hospital, and, consequently, much remains for distribution amongst the needy applicants. I have often lingered about at these gatherings of the poor, with their various jugs and plates, and enjoyed the delight of witnessing so many poor creatures the recipients of temporary support. These are deeds that enoble an institution —these are the daily practices at Christ's Hospital !

But to return to our jovial companions in the wards. At the conclusion of the grub feast began the sports and pastimes, about which, no doubt, the antiquarian Strutt would have found something worthy of record—blind-man's-buff, hunt-the-slipper, forfeits, and a host of nondescript amusements, occupied the time. Such fun—such perfect freedom from all restraint characterised the evening's amusements till ten o'clock, at which hour the monitor's

bell rung. Just the last hour all abandoned themselves to the most extravagant fun and frolic. Good humour reigned around; and it was considered dreadfully bad taste to exercise any bullying propensities or tyrannical rule on Christmas-night. Jokes—practical jokes—all must be endured with a smile. At the height of the amusement some one generally contrived to hear the bell, which we would willingly have muffled: no doubt the nurse listened carefully for its sound. Once more appears the establishment of discipline. “Our revels now are ended.” The fast declining candles, one by one, are extinguished, and the tired guests are quickly hushed in soundest sleep. So ends Christmas-day.

“Let me have leave to remember,” says Charles Lamb, “the festivities at Christmas, when the richest of us would club our stock to have a gaudy day, sitting round the fire replenished to the height with logs; and the penniless, and he that could contribute nothing, partook in all the mirth, and in some of the substantialities of the feasting: the carol sung by night at that time of the year, which, when a young boy, I have so often laid awake from seven (the hour of going to bed) till ten, when it was sung by the older boys and monitors, and have listened to, in their rude chanting, till I have been transported to the fields of Bethlehem, and the song which was sung at that season by the angels’ voices to the shepherds.”

CHAPTER XI.

Two years after my admission to the London school, occurred the circumstance of Dr. Lloyd’s examination of all the boys, with a view to eradicate that most unpleasant and troublesome disease, ringworm. We have discussed the proceeding in Chapter III., and it now only remains for me to describe the ultimatum

of the persecution to which the ill-fated number sentenced by the doctor were subjected. All means of conquering the disease in London having failed, it was considered prudent to try a change of air, and so we were transported to Hertford. I well recollect the glorious excitement and fun which attended our transit into the country. There were nearly 100 of us condemned by the doctor to try the curative effects of a change of air. The final arrangements being completed, and the day appointed for our journey, we awaited with peculiar curiosity the spring vans in which we were to be conducted to our new location. Crowded together in the vehicles, we did not care about the inconvenience, but joked and laughed under our calamity as only school-boys can.

We were treated very well on the road, for at Cheshunt, to our great surprise, bread and cheese and table beer were distributed with a liberal hand. Moreover at this spot we were permitted to ramble in the fields for at least an hour. It may be easily conceived how boys who had not beheld anything but bricks and mortar for some months would rush frantically about upon the green sward. We scampered here and there, ran races, jumped the hedges and ditches, and in the latter contrived to dye our yellow stockings a rich mud-colour. Our arrival at Hertford was quite an event, for no such occurrence had ever before taken place. To leave Hertford for London was an every-day proceeding, but for a London boy to return to the country school was something quite unusual. As elder boys, we were, of course, immediately chosen monitors, readers, and, in short, pounced upon to fill every official capacity, greatly to the chagrin and discomfort of the junior boys. I had the honour to be appointed one of the hall readers, and in the pride of my new station, I made an effort to eclipse all my predecessors. Although the steward approved of my reading, he much offended my dignity by saying, "Another time do not preach so."

The institution is situated at the London Road end

Hertford, near the railway station. The present buildings were erected about the year 1690, and possess a very interesting appearance when regarded from the street. On either side, a row of buildings, called the Wards or Dormitories, and in front of them a beautiful line of trees, gave to the play-ground a cheerful aspect. Opposite to the gates stands the Writing-school, a commodious but unpretending structure, very well adapted, however, for the purpose of a school-room. Adjoining this building is the dining-hall, where the boys take their meals. Several of the masters and officers reside on the foundation. The Hertford school is quite a different kind of place from the London institution. The studies, amusements and general conduct of the boys are of a nature peculiar to the place. The studies are, of necessity, very elementary, and suited to the age of the boys; but the amusements, guided by the advantage of a large field, are much more healthful and invigorating. Many of us that left London to visit Hertford for the first time considered the field to be a great luxury. How we revelled in a good game of cricket and kite-flying,—games in London perfectly unattainable. Among the many curious customs in vogue with the boys at Hertford, was one which I believe is peculiar to blues; it is the odd notion of making Caves, and depositing within them knives, tops, coins, pencil-cases, favourite marbles, and other trinkets. When a boy is about to leave Hertford for London, he seeks for a quiet nook, and there deposits whatever he has arranged shall be left behind. The knowledge of this weakness caused us to keep a sharp look-out for earth-diggers, when a batch of boys was to be transported to London. As soon as our playmates were safely seated in the coach, off we scampered to the field, and began exploring for booty. In turning up recent excavations, we sometimes brought to light knives and other articles which bore the marks of having been in sepulture for many years. Curiously enough, we never found any document which would lead to the date of entombment.

Yielding to *la mode*, I confess that my cave was prepared with much care, being arched over with pieces of slate frame, and carefully lined with broken platters and card-board. I wonder whether the wooden sarcophagus has been broken into, and if so, whether the resurrectionist slept soundly the next night after committing such an act of depredation.

The town of Hertford has always borne the reputation of being very political, and indeed *quelque chose de plus*. Our province is not to speak of free and independent electors, but simply to detail a circumstance which exceedingly amused us boys, and which arose from the great and continued excitement in the town, caused by a general election. The enthusiasm of party-feeling for popular candidates carried many of the voters to most unwarrantable lengths, and in some instances much mischief ensued, not to mention the great amount of ill-feeling that was disseminated. It is melancholy to witness the rancour of party against party displayed at a contested election in a small country town. At Hertford the Whigs most cordially hated the Tories, whilst the Radicals, being go-ahead fellows, considered opposition as their own peculiar element.

As an instance of party spirit, I will mention the pulling down of the blue-coat boys: I mean the leaden figures on the columns at the entrance gates. These images were, in a most dastardly manner, wrenched from their pedestals during the night, and being made of lead, their fall did not awaken the porter at the lodge. In the morning, to his dismay, he saw the images on the ground broken and defaced. I need scarcely add how much the Conservative feelings of all the officers in the foundation were outraged by this malicious act. A mischievous, unimportant, and somewhat ludicrous trick was played off upon a public functionary who very unwisely painted the palings in front of his house blue,—that being the colour of the Tories. As might be suspected, this act was not likely to escape the attention of some wag on the opposition. One morning the

palings were very neatly painted buff and blue, the colours of the Radicals, to the intense disgust of the official. Seeing and hearing so much of elections without the gates, it was very natural that we should be desirous of trying a game at mock election amongst ourselves. The first difficulty was, whom to select as candidates, and after much discussion the choice fell upon M. and myself. We were great chums, and on this account more particularly were we for the nonce put in opposition, the one to the other. As our election lacked the reality of a Whig and Tory struggle, so we escaped the ill-feeling which mostly attends it. We were, if possible, greater friends than ever. The formula of a real election was all gone through most rigidly, and for three days the canvassing was carried on with great spirit. I am not prepared to say that there was an entire absence of bribery and corruption—those indispensable adjuncts of all elections—for certain vacillating voters might have been seen hanging about the cake shops, to have their consciences set at rest, and their scruples removed by sundry puffs and gingerbread nuts. We polled every boy in the foundation, and some, I suspect, twice.* We actually dragged to the hustings one or two invalids from the infirmary, and made them pass through the mimic ordeal of respectable burgesses. It has been said that dead men have recorded, or rather have had their votes recorded; nor does it seem to me at all unlikely. This kind of thing, however, was quite beyond our means at command. I am sure the masters and nurses enjoyed the fun as much as we did: the latter, assisted by their daughters and servants, actually made for us flags and banners. At four o'clock, *pro forma*, the poll closed in my favour by a very few votes. Then followed the speeches, and a vote of thanks to the recorder. Arrangements were now made for the chairing, but, although I was flattered by the support of my school-fellows, I did not consider it prudent to have them for supporters in any other than a verbal manner.

* See Hogarth's Election.

An election without the pageant of chairing was quite out of the question ; so to crown the folly of the whole proceeding, the defeated candidate was carried round the buildings upon the boys' shoulders, whilst I walked triumphant at the head of the procession. Like senators, we talked of the election and our constituents also, but soon forgot both.

One Saturday afternoon, during a severe frost, a party of us having worn out our snow slides, went in search of new ice, and outside the gates we saw some town boys amusing themselves in right good earnest. Here was an opportunity which we could not think of losing, so without much deliberation we rushed into the street, and driving away the rightful owners, took possession of the slide. In the midst of our fun we were brought to an uncomfortable stand-still, by the arrival of the steward. Here was a situation very dramatic, no doubt, but anything but pleasant. Retreat was out of the question, so with dignified composure we capitulated. The steward said but little, but ordered us all to appear at his table before breakfast on Monday. This event occurred at the commencement of the Christmas holidays.

The dreaded morning arrived, and we presented ourselves at the tribunal. A scrutiny took place with a view of detecting the ringleader, which, however, was fruitless. With a sarcastic smile upon his countenance, the steward delivered judgment, to the effect that we were, each and all of us, to learn the whole Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to Philemon. Terrified at what we imagined a most severe task, we hurried from the hall immediately after grace had been said, and searched in our Bibles for the aforesaid epistle. Our countenances brightened up when we discovered that this formidable epistle consisted only of one chapter. By dint of a little application, we were prepared to repeat the task next morning. I fancied that the steward smiled when he asked us if the epistle consisted of one chapter only.

Beneath the Writing-schools were large vaults, in which

the winter supply of potatoes was carefully stowed away. The custodian of these regions, dark and drear, was an old man, whose temper had not been improved by the practical jokes so often played upon him by the boys. His position in the foundation was not an enviable one—poor man! everybody appeared to take advantage of him. However, it was one of his many duties to stow away and take care of the winter supply of potatoes. Now, one Saturday afternoon a few of us agreed to make up a marauding party, for the purpose of taking some spoil in the shape of potatoes. For some days we watched the going and coming of the keeper and his attendants—all this reminded us of the story of the Forty Thieves. The next undertaking was to explore the peculiar position of the potato sacks, and to make ourselves acquainted with the nooks and corners of these subterranean chambers.

The appointed day arrived, and our party assembled at the mouth of the cave, eager for the attempt. Lots were cast as to who should actually seize the booty. I should mention, that the cellar was in total darkness, excepting at a remote corner, where might have been seen a small circle of light, emitted from the rays of two miserable candles, which were evidently suffering from an insufficient supply of oxygen. Seated on the ground were two or more busy occupants selecting the potatoes for the Sunday's dinner. It required some searching before you could discover the dim outlines of the custodian and his assistants. Our smuggling crew consisted of six boys, who were disposed as follows:—two were stationed on guard at the entrance to the cave, two were to extinguish the candles, whilst the remaining pair were to pocket the potatoes, and decamp as fast as possible. Nothing could have succeeded better. By a well-directed aim, the candles were both extinguished and the booty seized before the astonished cellar-men could collect their scattered senses. Such, indeed, was the consternation produced among them, that they stumbled up and down amongst the potatoes, and so

afforded all six of us an opportunity of filling our pockets. When we had reached the extreme end of the field, we sat down to divide the spoil. Of course there was a very great hue-and-cry about the affair, although we always thought little pains were taken to trace the culprits. The audacity and success of the undertaking, no doubt, had their weight in shielding the depredators.

In graver matters, it frequently happens that men are heroes or knaves in proportion to their success or failure. I do not wish it to be understood that the *morale* of our little smuggling expedition was quite correct; but judge it lightly, dear reader —boys will be boys.

CHAPTER XII.

GAMES PECULIAR TO BLUE-COAT BOYS—SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER ENTERTAINING AND INSTRUCTIVE AMUSEMENTS.

“Omne bene
Sine pœnâ
Tempus est ludendi;
Venis hora
Absque mora
Libros deponendi.”

PERHAPS no boys so thoroughly enjoy their games and sports as the blues. The eagerness to excel each other is a great incentive to increased assiduity, whether in or out of school, at all large public establishments. The different wards keep together in their amusements, excepting, as it occasionally happens, there might take place a trial of strength or adroitness between two of them. The favourite games at Hertford were cricket and kite-flying: in London, hockey, prisoner’s base, and hopping-over. To different seasons of the year peculiar games are appointed; thus, marbles in May, whipping-tops and long-ropes in September, hockey in March, and so on.

The boys are very grand upon the subject of marbles, and some skilful or lucky players become absolute merchants in them, being the possessors of hundreds,—in some instances, thousands.

When the marble season commences this commodity is very scarce, but towards its termination you may purchase almost any number of marbles for a penny. Now is the time to speculate, and buy up the market for the next spring. This some long-sighted boys contrive to do each year, thereby making quite a little income. It is not an uncommon circumstance for boys to form a joint stock concern, accumulate a large number of marbles, and then to allow agents, so many in each dozen, for all they can win with stock provided by the general concern. Sometimes our agents would win largely, but at other times a company has been ruined by reckless trading. Some of these joint-stock concerns would have a floating capital of many thousands. Gambling in marbles, or, indeed, in any other way, was strictly prohibited; but keen as the beadle were, we eluded their vigilance.

Leap-frog, beat the bear, and fly the garter, are unlawful games,—and very properly so, for under any circumstances, they are dangerous, particularly so, when played at upon a stony or gravel surface. It is not pretended that these games were eschewed by the boys, for, upon the ordinary principle of hankering after forbidden fruit, we seized every possible chance of playing at them when the beadle were absent. Having once made up our minds at any time to do a little fly the garter, we selected a secluded spot, and appointed a scout to watch the beadle. Their approach was duly telegraphed, and in a moment we were all busy with the most harmless games conceivable. Our looker-on, as he passed, would eye us with a most suspicious leer, and sometimes even pretended to take down our names; but unless the lynx-eyed orderly happened to take us *in articulo ludendi*, he did not care to interfere. Besides the out-of-door games, we had the usual in-door amusements of forfeits, odd and

even, &c. &c. Cards, draughts, chess, and backgammon are non-allowable. I cannot pass over this subject without referring to one cloister game, which seems peculiar to blue-coat boys; it is called “good books,”* and is played by five boys in the following manner:—Five pieces of paper of exactly the same size and appearance are procured, and on each is written one or other of these words—Rex, Judex, Opifex, Fur, and Castigator; they are then carefully folded so as to prevent the possibility of guessing what is written. The five pieces of paper are at a given signal thrown into the air, and each boy seizes one. The lucky holder of Rex (the king) calls forth Judex (the judge) to give instructions to Opifex (the watchman) to seize Fur (the thief), who is condemned by the judge to receive so many strokes across the hand, administered by Castigator (the flogger). Collusion in this game is sometimes practised, and then woe-betide the unfortunate holder of Fur. Could the origin of this game be traced, no doubt it would be very curious.

“By sports like these are all their cares beguiled.”

Within the last fifty years Christ’s Hospital has been rebuilt, and now very little of the Grey Friars remains.

* It is just possible that the game of good books may have derived its origin from the circumstance of Cyrus, King of Persia, being chosen a king, in sport, by his play-fellows, when he was only ten years old. Herodotus, Book I., 114, chronicles that the boy king, “drest in a little brief authority,” scourged a nobleman’s son for disobeying his orders. Vide also Justini Historiæ Philippicæ, Lib. I., Cap. V., Mox rex inter ludentes forte delectus, &c. &c. In the story of Ali Cogia in the “Arabian Nights’ Entertainments,” something analogous to the game of good books may be seen. The Caliph was anxious to discover what game so much interested some ten or twelve children playing by moonlight. He sat down, therefore, upon a bench, and listened to the prattle of one of the liveliest of the group. The child said, “Come, let us play at the cadi—I will be the cadi. Bring Ali Cogia, and the merchant who defrauded him of his gold before me.” Now the child sat down with all the gravity of a cadi, whilst another, acting as an officer of the court, presented the plaintiff and defendant. The case proceeds—judgment is given—and the children, clapping their hands with a great deal of joy, seize upon the criminal, and bear him off to execution.

Many new arrangements for the comfort of the boys have been introduced; amongst others, the antiquated wooden bowls and trenchers have given place to the much more comfortable blue delf basins and plates, on which the arms of the foundation are emblazoned. The introduction of crockery for wooden plates must have sadly interfered with the popular amusement amongst the boys, of balancing and spinning round and round these articles, to the great horror of nurses and servants. In the diet, too, very laudable changes have taken place; amongst others, salad is allowed, when in season,—a luxury quite unheard of a few years back. It is not necessary to enumerate the many more salutary changes, as regards the comfort of the boys, all of which reflect great credit upon the governors. It is really extremely gratifying to any one who has been educated at Christ's Hospital, some few years back, to witness the increased comforts so liberally dispensed throughout the present management of the foundation. Great judgment is always required in making reforms, but, nevertheless, from time to time they must be made. In a former part of this slight sketch of a foundation with which my early reminiscences are blended, I have ventured to suggest a few changes, not in any spirit of undue interference, but purely with a view to the general improvement of the establishment. The governors have lately introduced the study of the French language, the acquisition of which, to boys, in our days, is of the greatest utility. Would it not be advisable to make the study of modern languages more prominent in the education of the boys? Would it not be more consonant with the wishes of many of the parents, that the classical studies should be made subservient to the commercial? Undoubtedly, in the case of boys destined for the Church, the classics must have the first place; but still we would not have passed lightly over modern languages, history geography, and elementary instruction in the arts and sciences.

At present but few of the boys have an opportunity of study-

ing French, but it is hoped that very soon arrangements will be made for the junior classes to receive instruction in this important language, which will, moreover, vary agreeably with the every-day Latin and Greek readings.

The study of German would also prove an excellent addition, to the usual routine of school exercise. A large number of boys, educated at Christ's Hospital, are destined to become clerks and assistants in banking and mercantile houses, and to them a knowledge of the modern languages is highly necessary.

In order to engender amongst the boys a taste for the arts and sciences, it would be as well if occasional lectures were delivered upon the most popular subjects, such as astronomy, chemistry, the steam-engine, electricity, optics, and others, bearing upon the wonderful laws of nature. Lectures upon these subjects, accompanied by experimental apparatus and diagrams, would be interesting and instructive. All these form a portion of education in our days, and should not be overlooked at Christ's Hospital; and I trust that the governors will see the necessity of adopting some measures to put in force these suggestions. Under the present system, a blue-coat boy, when he leaves the school at the age of fifteen years, although he may be well grounded in Latin and Greek, and, perhaps, writing and arithmetic, will be found lamentably deficient in a knowledge of the subjects to which I have alluded. Indeed the boy is anything but *au courant* with a youth of his own age who has been educated at a respectable collegiate or boarding-school. Nothing is so likely to induce habits of careful reading as attendance upon lectures; besides, it is a most delightful method of imparting instruction.

From time immemorial blue-coat boys have possessed the privilege of inspecting the Tower of London, to which circumstance Charles Lamb so amusingly refers:—

“We were in the habit of making up parties, on leave days, to visit the interior of this interesting fortress. The menagerie, which has been for some years closed, was, of course, the most attractive to our youthful

tastes. Many an agreeable afternoon have I passed in watching the habits of the animals, playing with the monkeys, and listening to the remarks of the visitors. Then, again, the Jewel Office was a grand sight for a boy. Only think of being within a few feet of the Crown jewels!"

But, again, the horse armoury, how interesting and instructive! It was in this place that we studied our History of England. In the grammar-school our attention was directed *in toto* to Latin and Greek. Who does not recollect the transparency of Tilbury Fort, and Queen Elizabeth in the attitude of mounting her charger? How formally, yet tastefully, the guns and pistols were arranged, and what an array of swords and pikes! It required some care to prevent oneself from stumbling against the pyramids of cannon-balls, arranged in lines, in the somewhat dark and dreary ground-floor warehouses. As boys, our reflections were on glorious war—as men of the present day, we, with chastened hearts, rather return thanks for the blessings of peace.

A visit to the Tower is no doubt still appreciated by the blue-coat boy; but I would propose something more. I would recommend to the notice of the governors other places in the metropolis where amusement and instruction are blended. Surely it would not be impracticable to make arrangements for the boys to visit, from time to time, the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Zoological Gardens, the Polytechnic, and many other places of a similar description. It is not enough to say that the boys have an opportunity of visiting these places on leave-day, with their friends. I would suggest that certain days be appointed on which the boys should go, accompanied by persons qualified to explain the various objects presented to their attention. The little expense and trouble arising from these visits ought not to weigh against the invaluable benefit which the boys would derive from them.

As boys, we had some odd notions respecting the manners and behaviour of the various masters. By the hasty, or cat-like step—by the quiet closing, or loud slamming of a door—by the half-suppressed and slow-tuned hum, or the brisk and staccato

execution of a similar noise, we measured the demeanour of a master for the day.

There was a classical master who was a perfect barometer in these matters. If anything had happened in his domestic arrangements to disturb his equanimity, he bounced into the school-room with a very sinister smile, suggestive of taking his revenge upon the first unlucky misplacer of a genitive for a dative case. We might have said with one of Hecate's companions—

“By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.”

Strange coincidence, this gentleman was very fond of flowers, and we absolutely judged of the state of his mind, in the absence of any more tangible sign, by the colour of the exotics which appeared in his button-hole. If he chanced to bring into the school-room a deep red rose or geranium, woe betide some one or another—if, on the contrary, a neat little bouquet in which the scarlet was not very predominant, then we might calculate upon a mildness of behaviour that was quite delightful. All this might be rendered philosophically as follows:—When annoyed, our irritable pedagogue would naturally rush to the school-room; of course, he could not think of making an *entrée* without a flower; in his haste he would make a snatch at the first which met his gaze; doubtless one of a red colour would attract his notice. Regard the other side of the picture. In an amiable humour, the gentleman would leisurely saunter along the gravel paths of his beautifully arranged garden, and slowly and carefully make his selection amongst the more delicate and less obtrusive colours. It occasionally happens in public schools that some highly respected individual attempts too long the arduous task of instructing the rising generation. Such a case must be fresh in the memory of many of the boys of my time. The worthy old gentleman to whom I allude created no small diversion amongst us by his eccentricities, which were, however, no doubt nearly akin to “second childish-

ness." He was very near-sighted; nor did his spectacles appear of much service to him. Our tasks were easily gone through before his desk, and he never detected the *fudging*, which was always a thing of course. Sometimes the old gentleman was very irascible: perhaps some boy had run up against him on the school-room landing, or he might have trodden upon an old slate—of course placed upon the floor by accident—then it was necessary to soothe his temper with a little flattery, to which he was not a little susceptible. One repetition-day (something equivalent to rent-day amongst men), we were quite alarmed at the unusual asperity of our aged master; nothing appeared to go smoothly, no answers appeared to be correctly given. My turn was just coming, when fortunately Lewis Evans saved us all by a delectable piece of soft speaking.

The poor Welsh boy was in a fix. He did not know his lesson, and so he stammered out that he was afraid his master was not aware that the window behind his desk was open. "I know that. Tell me something which I don't know," was the stern reply., "If you please, sir, I cannot do that," was the rejoinder of the pupil, dropping his head to smile unperceived. The dose had its effect, the old gentleman's countenance relaxed, and Evans finished the repetition quite pleasantly.

Much has been said, and no doubt with justice, upon the subject of presentations being unfairly distributed. The Royal Founder intended that the benefits of the school should be enjoyed by boys whose parents were unable to educate them at their own expense, and it should be the duty of the Committee and Governors to see that the sons of the widow and fatherless are not excluded.

There is much about Christ's Hospital which tends to enoble a boy; and if he has only sufficient discrimination in the choice of his companions, he has great opportunities of increasing his store of general information. There are advantages and also, disadvantages in a large public school; but, I think, in most cases the former predominate.

A blue-coat boy has generally a high regard for order, which is not surprising, as he does everything to the sound of a bell. Then, again, he is strongly imbued with the healthy principles of religion and loyalty. Further, he is so accustomed to wholesome subordination and regularity, and to the invaluable habit of self-reliance, that he is fitted for the most important situations of life.

CONCLUSION.

On looking through an old file of newspapers for the year 1771, an advertisement of the “State Lottery” arrests my attention. Here is the last paragraph copied *verbatim* :

“Exact Numerical and Register Books are kept, and the earliest Account of the Success of all registered Tickets and shares transmitted to any Part of this, or any other Kingdom. All country orders strictly obeyed, and every Thing relative to the Lottery transacted with fidelity. Scheme gratis. Letters (post paid) duly answered. The Lottery begins Drawing the 18th November. Tickets and shares insured during the Drawing.”

The above appeared in the *Public Advertiser* of September 7th, 1771. This newspaper was printed by H. S. Woodfall, celebrated as being the printer of Junius’s Letters. Blue-coat boys were mostly selected to draw numbers and chances from the wheel at the state lotteries. In the year 1775, some of the boys so chosen were subject to great temptation by the offer of bribes, for the purpose of inducing them to commit a fraud. Only one instance of success is recorded. Two blues were appointed to draw the Museum lottery at Guildhall, and to these attendants at the wheel a sum of money was offered to conceal a ticket. They very properly refused. The man who offered the bribe was taken before the Lord Mayor, but as the law did not provide for

this peculiar case of delinquency, he was discharged. In December, however, of the same year, a blue confessed that he had been prevailed upon to conceal a ticket.

This affair was very carefully gone into before Sir Charles Asgill, and in consequence of the revelations made, the Lords of the Treasury deliberated upon the means of preventing similar practices, and certain "Orders" were resolved upon. The curious upon this subject will find the details in the "Universal" and also the "Gentleman's Magazine" of the above date.

Lotteries appear to have commenced in the year 1569, and to have ended in 1826. Tontines—a description of lotteries in life-rents, and annuities—were introduced by Lawrence Tonti. The first lottery on the plan of Tonti was set on foot at Paris in 1660. In our days there are evils existing of almost equal depravity with lotteries; but then the children of such a noble foundation as Christ's Hospital are not called upon to assist in the orgies. Such times are gone, we hope never more to return; but are we progressing so rapidly as the march of improvement demands? Does not a spirit of indifference trammel our onward progress?

The laws of nature teach us that all things are subject to perpetual change. Some very curious *savants* would even venture to name the number of years required for various transformations. It is asserted that the human anatomy undergoes a total change every seven years. Perhaps some learned doctor will soon venture to tell us, by exact calculation of course, how many ages must elapse before wood is converted into coal, or a piece of charcoal into a diamond.

The two most powerful agents of the present day, the steam engine and the electric telegraph, have had to encounter much opposition: now, however, they have both become matters of interest to all.

Nobody, I think, will deny that with all the wild vagaries of theorists in the present day, we are, nevertheless, more practical than our forefathers. Here, however, an interesting exception

occurs to me : Sir Isaac Newton, more than a century since had been requested by the governors of Christ's Hospital, to consider the best schemes for training the mathematical boys. This eminent man at once suggested that practical teaching should go hand-in-hand with theoretical. He intimated that as only a small selection of mathematical boys was made from a large number of scholars, there would be collected together most efficient materials for the purposes of sound education in all that appertained to naval affairs. No doubt the great Newton considered that the mathematical school of Christ's Hospital might become a nursery for British seamen. Would it not be practicable, and if so, would it not be advisable, to educate the so-called sea boys of the Blue-coat School with a little more regard to their future occupations? It seems to me that Newton would have educated the boys intended for sea service almost on board a man-of-war ; at any rate, there is little doubt that he considered practical teaching of the greatest importance. It would not be a very difficult or expensive proceeding for the mathematical boys to reside a portion of the year near one of our great dock-yards, and so have an opportunity of taking an active part in all that appertained to sea life.* Surely nobody at all interested in the welfare of our navy could object to the carrying out of such an undertaking. "My true works may be found on the shelves in Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios." Thus writes Charles Lamb, referring to his situation as clerk in the East India House. I have sometimes wondered why Charles Lamb, who so often must have lingered before the interesting collection of curiosities in the Museum at the East India House, did not suggest the establishment of a museum at his favourite school. Many of the boys who leave Christ's Hospital go abroad, and every blue would be glad to lend a helping hand for the formation of so useful and interesting an object as a museum. The governors

* On a similar plan to the boys at Greenwich Hospital.

would be at little outlay beyond the building, and even this, I think, might be spared, as there are, in all probability, some of the rooms in connection with the great hall, unoccupied. As to a curator, one of the elder boys could undertake the post.

Besides the establishment of a museum, I should also advise that each ward had its own library, in preference to one for the general use of the boys. The library might be easily managed by the monitors, after the books had been approved by the Grecians. The boys themselves could easily make a nice collection of books. If it were once understood that a boy, on leaving Christ's Hospital, was expected to present one book, for the benefit of his successors, how soon would the shelves become filled. Moreover, many blues that have left the school would feel proud of becoming donors for the amusement and instruction of the boys of their own ward.

In throwing out these hints, let it not be imagined that I have any wish to metamorphose boys into what Dickens calls "little men." No; I am only anxious that Christ's Hospital should stand pre-eminent amongst the institutions of the country, for affording to its inmates every means of mental culture.

It is a pleasant subject for reflection, that the governors of Christ's Hospital, recently, in the most handsome manner, yielded to the requisition of the Society of Blues a permission for the tercentenary festival to take place in their noble hall.* Now is a season peculiarly adapted for the introduction of salutary and beneficial changes. The time has gone by when sons were satisfied to achieve merely what their fathers had done before them. A forward movement points out the course which we must steer, and much responsibility rests upon all those who, from indifference or interested motives, attempt to check it.

* Unfortunately the breaking out of the scarlet fever prevented the dinner taking place in the Great Hall.

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